



GATE OF LIFE

Tonic Herbalism
and
Taoist Health Philosophy
in the
Gate of Life Lineage

Rehmannia Dean Thomas

Dawn Drive Books



Do you wish to be a student of the Gate of Life Lineage?

The Gate of Life

Tonic Herbalism
And
Taoist Health Philosophy

By Rehmanna Dean Thomas

Edited by Charles Bingham

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Introduction

For over 5000 years, a great and ancient form of herbal healing has been cultivated by reclusive hermits living in the misty crags of China's five sacred mountains. This wisdom officially began in 2975 B.C., when a mythical character named Shennong meticulously documented 365 therapeutic herbs in the first known herbal pharmacopoeia. Yet, Chinese "wild history" and folklore alludes to the use of herbalism from a much earlier date, and that Shennong may merely have collated information on eons of pre-existing human experience with therapeutic plants.

Since that time, a wonderful and sophisticated lineage of plant therapy and an accompanying philosophy for optimal living has been carefully cultivated. Only now are we hearing about this profound health system in the West; the precepts I will unveil in this short book represent a glance into a great jewel of health wisdom.

The Gate of Life is an ancient lineage of pharmacopoeia from China, comprising a vast body of formulaic herbal knowledge of valuable plants and their effects on our physiology and psychology. The Gate of Life encompasses a holistic philosophy for health and longevity, deep in the roots of Taoism.

These reclusive wise men and women living in the remote mountains of China accumulated insight and

knowledge of the relationship of human health to the natural world. This cultivated and documented research, consistently practiced for many centuries, delineates universal health principles of unfathomable depth. These records of empirical observation for the properties of herbs may be even more applicable today than ever before. The precepts in this documentation, including classification of plant's therapeutic actions on various organs and energetics, can be integrated with modern health systems, and aid in the formulation of effective medicinal products and protocol.

Herbs were first used to help people adapt and thrive in the wilderness, to maintain balanced health ~ homeostasis ~ before the pathogens of larger population centers fomented sickness and disease requiring a system of medicine. Herbs were used to enhance and fortify overall health, rather than for their curative properties. Thus began a health ideology seeks to penetrate the origins of the inextricable relationship between life and health. The Gate of Life principles represent the roots of life, and strengthen the core of our existence, both physically and energetically.

The Chinese medical system has become quite labyrinthine over thousands of years of development. Modern research in China, Japan and Korea, has compiled huge amounts of data on herbs, and the majority of this work, conducted without bias, has largely verified what the founders of this ancient system documented. The precepts of this system have filtered into a health philosophy that is surprisingly simple to grasp. The essential message of Taoist

precepts is at one point a singular truth, but with a depth we could spend the rest of our lives studying.

Taoist health philosophy ascribes three primary energies that constitute life; the physical body and its reproductive potential; the flame of energy that keeps our lives in flux; and the spirit of higher consciousness. These are the *Three Treasures*. Herbs that build and support these three energies, combined with a healthy diet, may constitute an optimal daily regimen for the preservation and maintenance of long-term health, as well as the attainment of wisdom.



An Apprenticeship Lineage

The tradition of the Gate of Life has been handed down from Master to pupil; it is an oral lineage. The traditional apprentice period is 8 years. After which the student has enough basic knowledge to begin teaching a new apprentice. This grand apprenticeship is seen throughout Chinese art and folklore. When entering a Chinese art shop today, we may

see a sculpture of a wise old medicine man sitting in deep contemplation, with his cup of tea and Materia Medica by his side. A young apprentice sits below, carefully tending the fire under the tea pot.

The master and pupil mutually commit to preserve and contribute to this great body of practical wisdom, and to disseminate the knowledge for future generations. Now, society has changed, and it is more difficult and possibly hindering to spend 8 years with a Master. So, I have created the first online course of the Gate of Life lineage. In this format, the apprentice may still receive a one-on-one training from me, and will receive herb packets in the mail. Once I realized I could speak directly to the apprentice through a computer, and that they could hold the whole herbs in their hands, I knew we could continue the true Master/pupil lineage of the Gate of Life without compromise, in an accelerated format. This book is a revision of the text I wrote for the online course audio lessons.

I am indebted to my teacher and his teacher, for keeping this tradition with reverence, and protecting its integrity. The Gate of Life Materia Medica and the philosophy of its use is a valuable gift that I am honored to share with you.

My Apprentiship

In 1979, mystic and astrologer Sharon Leong gave me a copy of the Tao Te Ching (Whitter Bynner Trans.) which seemed to open my akashic memory of Chinese wisdom. She and I traveled to China in 1985, where we visited herb farms and saw peasants riding into Jilin in the Northern Manchurian Province with just-picked herbs piled on their mule-carts, and I was fascinated by the ancient appearance of it all. I wandered the herb bazaars, intrigued to learn more. Back in San Francisco, we bought a book entitled Chinese Tonic Herbs, by Ron Teeguarden. Sharon had me take daily tinctures she made from his recipes, and I felt a deep level of health resilience I had never experienced before.

In 1997, I visited a friend of mine who cooked at a local pub in Los Angeles. While in his kitchen, I found an old magazine on top of the pizza oven. An image of the Chinese beauty Goddess Quan Yin was visible through the grease-stained cover, and it read “Chinese Tonic Herbs for Beauty,” by Master Herbalist Ron Teeguarden. I carried it with me, feeling it was a mysterious, almost alien language containing a cryptic wisdom that I could not fathom.

In early 1998, I was working as a green juicing therapist, and faced a dilemma with a client; I was helping her, but could not get to the cause of her distress. I prayed for a teacher. That same evening by synchronicity, I met Master Teeguarden. He gave a brief lecture, and the information excited me. Approaching this towering figure, I stated that I was a fan. He asked me to come to his house the next day. At 9 A.M. I knocked on his door. We sat in his parlor,

decorated with beautiful Chinese artwork, statues and giant mushrooms. After a short discussion, he instructed an associate of his to show me how to make an herbal tea, and retreated upstairs.

Within three hours, I was given a crash course on elixir making, and had combined specific weights of sticks, roots, bark, leaves, and rocks from a list created for a client. I cooked the herbs in a hemp bag immersed in water in a large commercial pressure cooker. The cooked tea was filtered and heat-sealed into single-serving retort pouches. I took an example of my finished brew to Master Teegarden. After sipping, a smile came over his face. He took my hand and examined it.

“Ah, you’ve got the dusts of the herbs under your fingernails. You’ll be a true Tonic Herbalist!”

I went home elated. After three days, Master Teegarden declared that I was his apprentice and “Teamaster.” For the next eight years, he taught me ~ as he was trained by his Master Sun Jin Park ~ the precepts of the oldest natural health system in human history: the Gate of Life. Master Teegarden was the first westerner to receive this knowledge when Master Park initiated him in the mid 1970’s, and was now a recognized Master Herbalist ~ a title given by the current editor of the Chinese herbal Materia Medica.

Master Teegarden’s close attention was instrumental in my learning. He always maintained that I could spend the rest of my life studying Tonic Herbalism and Taoist health philosophy, and never get to the bottom of the teachings; he was right. I have spent the majority of my time since

meeting Master Teegarden, including nine years as an independent practitioner, studying and internalizing knowledge and wisdom cultivated by pre-Taoist sages and adepts, wise men and women, seers, alchemists and shamans.

The philosophy of The Gate of Life is multifaceted, and can take lifetimes to fully comprehend. Learning the technical precepts of Chinese herbology requires much study and application, but the real lessons come over time, by observing life at its deepest levels. This is what the Gate of Life focuses on: Life's mysterious energy and interdependence. We become informed and attain wisdom as the knowledge becomes clearer.

Ron would say to me, "You will not only be an herbalist, not only a healer; you must be the Light." When one has mastered the knowledge, developed the spirit and humbled to the mystery, one can radiate *The Light* of healing.

This book represents a seed of that knowledge, when planted in your mind, will unfold into deeper perception as you live your life with integrity and mindfulness. Hopefully, these initiatory teachings will have a positive impact on your destiny, understanding our existence as a continuum of cycles propelled by dynamic equilibrium ~ the energetic polarity of *Yin* and *Yang*. Like the farmer who has seen one season's crop harvested, awakes another day, happy to see the budding of the next crop. There is no loss, only continuous unfolding. There is no end to creation; the more you learn, the more will be presented to you.

Taoist health discipline *is* about the attainment of optimal health for the physical body, but when we combine this with a desire to unfold the spiritual parameters in our lives, then we have the potential for ultimate health. Of all species that co-inhabit our Earth, only we have the unique opportunity of consciously choosing to refine and expand ourselves through knowledge in the esoteric and exoteric worlds.¹ With a healthy body and a positive, perceptive and curious mind, we can transform; we become *The Light*, and can inspire others. We may be catalysts for a new era, where all live in health and harmony, and we begin giving back the gifts of the Earth which we used in our past lives.

Taoist Tonic Herbalism is a truly great healing art, one that has been preserved in relative isolation in the Far East until recently. Westerners may finally be ready to receive wisdom from the primal and intuitive depths of human experience...and apply it to secure a synchronous place in evolutionary destiny.

Chapter One

Origins of Herbalism and The Gate of Life Lineage

¹ Animals may express conscious choices affecting evolutionary growth, but

Woven into a written history of over 5000 years, the Chinese fascination with high mountains is of particular note. One could not remain uninspired when viewing the lofty splendor of the many famed rocky crags among China's mountain ranges; it is no wonder they figure prominently in Chinese folklore. Ancient peoples living in these regions believed that mountains, especially the tallest ones, were pillars bridging Heaven and Earth. The mountain areas were, and still are, regarded as sacred places where one might gain access to heavenly realms, and it is believed that magical spirits and powerful deities dwell among their upper reaches.

The chiseled pinnacles of Mount Huangshan rise above China's "sea of clouds" —arguably the most breathtaking landscape on earth. The familiar scroll paintings of rugged vertical landscapes attest to this mountain as their origin of inspiration. Artists and nature seekers have flocked to Huangshan's peaks for over five millennia. Monks and religious aspirants have made this mountain their home, constructing monasteries of great splendor in the alpine regions.

Other sacred Taoist and Buddhist mountains include the "flowery mountain" of Huashan—its five peaks resemble a five petaled flower—and the "purple palace mount" of Wu Tai Shan. In the Wudang Mountains, Taoist monasteries of

great magnificence have been constructed. *Tai Chi* is said to have originated there. Mount Qingcheng is another important center of Taoism and is the place where the Yellow Emperor studied medicine. The mountain's 36 peaks are home to Dujiangyan Giant Panda Center.

To the north, in the Eastern Manchurian province, volcanic Mount Changbai's snowy crown erupts out of the forested hills. Nestled within its crater is Heaven Lake, the highest and deepest of its type. This mountain is revered in Chinese history as the birthplace of the Manchu peoples. The surrounding forest comprises the last untouched deciduous forest in the northern hemisphere and is today a biosphere monitored by the Chinese government and the U.N.

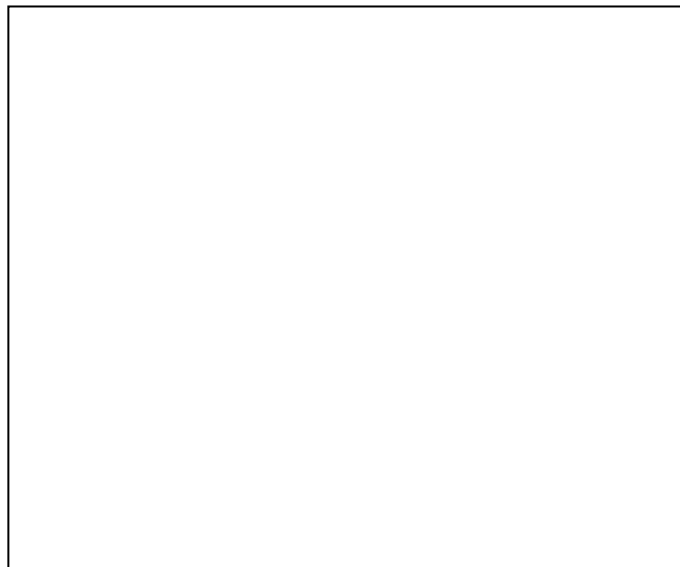
These are among China's many sacred mountains. They retain a resplendent history in Chinese folklore, and are well preserved national treasures. Their fame is heightened by stories, from ancient times until today, of the presence of immortals, reclusive hermits who roam their ravines and dense primordial forests.

According to legend, as well as accounts in medical manuals and political treatises, these legendary immortals are said to take herbs and live in such accordance with nature that they defy mortality. They are called *hsien*.

The Chinese character for *hsien* depicts both man and mountain. The first known dictionary of Chinese letters, the *Shuowen Jiezi*, compiled around 121CE (current era), shows 𠄎 as "appearance of a person on a mountaintop". *Hsien* is derived from *xian*, which means "to get old and not die," and "moves into the mountains." The phonetically similar

Japanese name *sennin* means "immortal person; transcendent."

Early Chinese writing, beginning around 5000 BP (before present), describes these immortals as naturalist recluses who remained to themselves and wandered the steep mountain trails collecting herbs and natural foods. They ate fresh weeds and roots, and they found deeply empowering herbs. These *hsien* hermits are depicted in ancient scroll paintings and sculptures trekking among the arduous trails with knap sacks on their backs bulging with roots and sprouts. The *hsien* is often accompanied by a young apprentice.



Through austere living in these lofty places, the *hsien* were said to have intermingled with the mists of heavenly realms, and eventually discovered how to overcome Earthly restraints and the ravages of time. They also found that combinations of special herbs could make powerful elixirs of longevity. It is said that drinking these elixirs made them immortal.

Being reclusive, they have not been seen very often. Yet, even today, a *hsien* immortal is reportedly spotted wandering in the high mountains. There are even stories where *hsien* are seen flying among the precipices, and thus they are called *tien hsien*; celestial immortals. *Xian*, the Chinese root for *hsien*, can also mean "rise up-ascend." The Tibetan word *gšen*, may have similar etymology, meaning "shaman, one who has supernatural abilities, including travel through the air".

The earliest record of a legendary immortal is found on an oracle bone from approx 3300 BP. She is Xi Wangmu, the "Queen Mother of the West," who "controls immortality and the stars." She dwells high in the fabled Kunlun mountains (kunlun means "high and precarious"). Xi Wangmu resides in a garden hidden by high clouds, where she attends a colossal Tree of immortal peaches that only ripen once every 3000 years. The Tree connects heaven and earth. A ladder to its upper reaches is traveled by spirits and shamans. She is the guardian angel of women and advisor to all emperors.

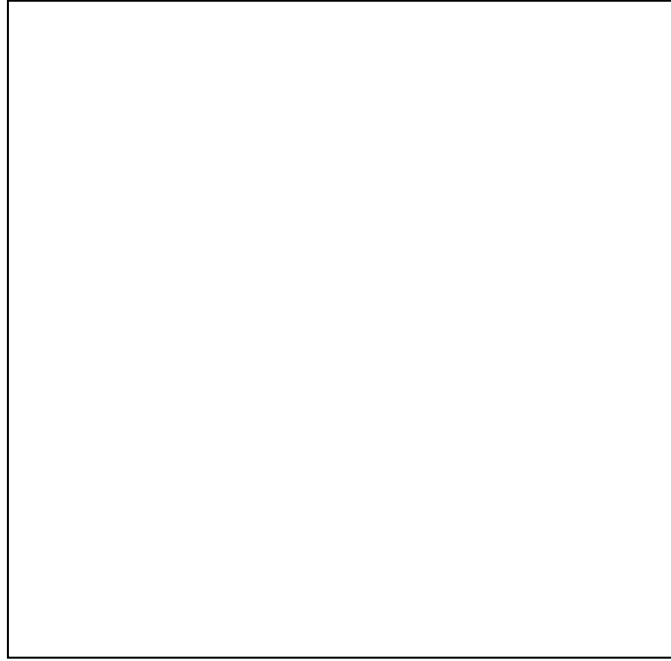
There is an important yearly Taoist festival in honor of Xi Wangmu, called the Double Seven festival. At the year's mid point, on the seventh day of the seventh month, at the seventh hour, Xi Wangmu descends to dwell among humans. Taoists flock to designated areas in order to have "divine meetings and ascents."ⁱ Universal energies are in perfect balance on this night, "when the divine and human worlds touch."ⁱⁱ This festival has morphed in modern years into the annual Magpie Festival, where women weave beautiful tapestries.

The *Huainanzi*, "Masters from Huainan," an important historical book written by scholar Liu An during the Han Dynasty, approx. 200 BP contains the first written reference to an elixir of immortality granted by Xi Wangmu. She intended to give it to an archer but his wife took it instead and was transformed into the Moon. In the *Songs of Chu*, Xi Wangmu is asked to share her divine nectar. She confers her elixir and "A thousand years are just a small crack, like a cricket's chirp."ⁱⁱⁱ

A poem is found inscribed upon a mirror from the Han Dynasty:

When thirsty, they drink from the jade spring; when hungry,
they eat jujubes. They go back and forth to the divine
mountains, collecting mushrooms and grasses. Their
longevity is superior to that of metal or stone. The Queen
Mother of the West.^{iv}

This artwork depicts the Queen Mother of the West holding a lingzhi mushroom, a sacred herb associated with immortality, on which we will focus in subsequent chapters.



Xi Wangmu © 2001, Max Dashu

To the east, a fabled mountain called Penglai rose out of the sea. This was a place of pure white beings and temples made of gold. Plants grow there that are said to imbue immortality on one who takes them. Xi Wangu's eastern female counterpart, the beauty goddess Magu, is said to dwell on this island. In art, Magu is depicted holding a flask containing an elixir of eternal youth. Magu shares Mt. Penglai with the Eight Immortals of Chinese folklore, who are romanticized versions of real persons who supposedly lived in ancient times. After gaining celestial immortality,

they are said to have gathered to dwell atop the island mountain of Penglai.

Four of the famed Eight Immortals are said to have used elixirs, studied alchemy and/or practiced restricted dietary regimens. These include another woman, He Xiangnu. During her youth, a divine personage appeared to her in a dream and instructed her to eat powdered mica, forgo the eating of ordinary food, and to remain a virgin. Through these compliances, she became ethereal and immune from death.

Li Tieh-Kuai walks with an iron crutch and is depicted as an ugly old man with dirty face, scraggly beard and messy hair held by a golden band. He has a gourd slung over his shoulder or held in his hand. This flask is said to hold a powerful medicinal elixir that he uses to heal the sick and needy. He is said to have studied under the venerable Master Lao Tzu, who gave him a pill that enabled him to fly at great speed. Li shares similar traits with the Greek God Chiron.

Zhang Guolao is said to have been 700 years old at the time of the Tang Dynasty (approx. 800 CE). He made a liquor from herbs that had medicinal properties, and fed this elixir to the other members of the Eight Immortals. He was also known to be a master of Taoist qigong and could go without food for days, surviving on only a few sips of wine.

Zhongli Quan lived during the Han Dynasty and learned secrets of alchemy. He was said to have learned how to transform base stones into gold, which he distributed to the poor. He is often depicted in art as carrying a flask of wine (wine was often a decanting menstruum for herbs).

Aside from fanciful folk tales, Chinese historical documents, medical manuals and political treatises also describe many reclusive mountain hermits living among China's high peaks. These sages sought to glean deeper truths about nature and its mechanics in order to pierce deeper into life's energetics, to plumb the root of the essence of life and override life's purported restraints.

Could it be true that such immortals dwelled, and may still exist, among these mountains?

Chinese proto-history, or "wild history" purports that Humans may have been living around In Northern China (now the Manchurian Province) since approx. 60,000 BP. Recent archeological findings are moving closer to verifying this. For example, Dennis Murphy discusses evidence of grain cultivation in Northeastern China from approx. 30,000 BP.^v

This indicates that these people had quite a long time to develop understanding of nature's cycles and to discover methods of living among the wild lands, and which herbs to take, and which foods to eat. They watched the sun rise and set and the moon wax and wane. They witnessed the warm growth of summer and the die-back of winter, and they came to recognize that life followed a cyclical pattern of growth and exertion, followed by rest and decay. They also recognized that life was beholden to a dualistic energetic polarity, driver of this dynamic equilibrium. They called these opposing energies *yin* and *yang*. By this realization they came to understand the inner workings of life, its

mechanisms of perpetuation; thus, the basic philosophy of life and its thrivance, according to the Chinese, was born.

The majority of northern China's Manchurian Province is comprised of low lying, rounded mountains covered by thick deciduous and alpine forests. In geological terms, these mountains are very old, having experienced two or three planetary extinction cycles; they appear similar to North American Appalachian Mountains. Humus from decaying plant matter has returned to the soil for eons, creating highly complex and diverse biology.

Around 50,000 years ago a massive volcano erupted causing a violent tumult. Today, this volcanic mountain is called Changbai Shan, or Mount Changbai, located on the border of Northern China and North Korea. With the eruption of this volcano, the region accumulated, and still holds exceptional potency in terms of energy and botanical diversity. Ashen carbons were distributed over the surface area of the region, and deep minerals were brought to the surface that were high in diamagnetism ~ an Earth-based form of magnetism that governs gravity and levity and keeps the planet balanced on its poles. Diamagnetism comprises the Earth's magnetic field, which emanates outward from our planet's core.

Originally, the Earth's surface was very high in diamagnetism, which has balanced out as the biosphere attained diversity and coalesced into relatively stable symbiotic equilibrium. Diamagnetism assists plants and trees with vertical growth and enhances their reach and

resiliency. The Changbai Mountain area was infused with this energy, promoting the evolution of plant forms with powerful life-force and “upright Chi.” Potent plant species thrive there; Schizandra, Ginseng, Gastrodia, Rehmannia, Ho Sho Wu, Astragalus, Epimedium, and many more.

Researchers have recently determined that the Earth’s diamagnetic energy is now rapidly dissipating, losing approximately seven percent of its force every 100 years. Relatively speaking, the Changbai Mountain area currently contains higher levels than most other parts of the Earth. Plants sourced from this region are increasingly important for our health due to their high concentrations of energetic properties.



Mt. Changbai (Changbai *Shan*)

The Chinese believe this area is the original location of the first ancestors of the Asian races. It is not known where these first inhabitants came from, whether they had migrated there, or just appeared. Some Chinese fables contend they were extra-terrestrial or came from races of previous lost civilizations. It could be possible the use of these powerful herbs by the people of the Changbai region assisted their survival through mini ice ages, facilitating a rapid leap² from a Neanderthal-like species into *Homo Sapiens sapiens*; the modern human.

There are other locales on Earth where ancient herbalism has been discovered. In Northern Iraq, remains of a Neanderthal man were uncovered in a cave, dated approx. 60,000 B.P. Around him were found high concentrations of the pollens of eleven medicinal herbs, indicating he was a medicine man, or was being attended to by one.^{vi}

Chinese folklore alludes to a shrouded era of human proto-history, from approx. 30,000 to 7000 BP, when a legendary people came to live on Changbai Mountain. They were called *Hsien*, which means 'Immortals.' The Chinese and Koreans believe their races are derived from these Hsien. Legends attest they attained immortality through perfection of life-force in the abundant natural environment of Mt. Changbai, and five other sacred mountains where Hsien hermits are said to exist to this day. They include Mt. Huang

² See Punctuated equilibrium by Gould.

Shan in Anhui province, Mt. Huashan, where the Queen Mother of the West dwells, and where the Yellow Emperor is said to have flown away on his dragon into the realms of immortality.

Ancient scroll paintings depict old wise men trekking over the rugged terrain. Chinese folk stories are replete with tales of Hsien immortals and hermits, and describe them performing supernatural acts. Historical books and Chinese medical documents tell of ancient sages living in the wild mountain uplands, who attained incredible longevity, having discovered powerful life-enhancing herbs, or “Elixirs of Immortality.” Pure air, water, and unadulterated mineral rich foods sustained them, while living symbiotically in their environment, with deep reverence for the cycles of nature that provided illumination and perception of the mysteries of life.

The Chinese believe Hsien Immortals can still be found inhabiting the wild and protected regions of these mountain’s remote highlands. The Immortals are said to be reclusive, wanting no part in civilization’s follies. Even today there are sightings of old sages hiking through the forest with herb-collecting packs; the Hsien Masters are not only men, but also women-- including the Goddess of Beauty, Quan Yin and Xi Wangu; the Queen Mother of the West, have been noted throughout Chinese history.

Chinese art and culture are infused with Hsien folklore. For example, the dragon, so deeply ensconced in Chinese art, is actually a depiction of an ancient Hsien who has shapeshifted into the supernatural form. The Dragon is often

depicted flying above clouds. This stems from tales that Hsien had attained the ability to fly. They were said to have transgressed the so-called boundaries of physical matter and became ethereal beings; cosmic worm-hole travelers, who visit other worlds, and occasionally return to this one. Hsien are reportedly still seen, flying in the remote uplands of Mount Changbai, as well as the other four sacred mountains of China. They are called *Tien Hsien*; Celestial Immortals.

How they may have achieved this lofty inter-dimensional potential and immortality is difficult to prove, but we do know they were the founders of Taoist health philosophy, and discovered the Tonic herbs that supposedly gave them special abilities. While their wisdom has been cultivated throughout the ages, it has been kept secret, except for exclusive use by the elite of the Chinese Dynasties. This knowledge has been guarded from exploitation, deep in esoteric obscurity, as an essential spiritual philosophy.

Origins of Taoist thought:

Yin and Yang

During this early period, an important symbol was created, which not only summarizes Taoist health ideology, but also defines life as we know it. Much insight and perception was involved in the forming of this symbol, and the knowledge of its meaning fueled the ascent of Asian civilizations.

This is an understanding of two fundamental complementary energies in all life, an equal and dynamic

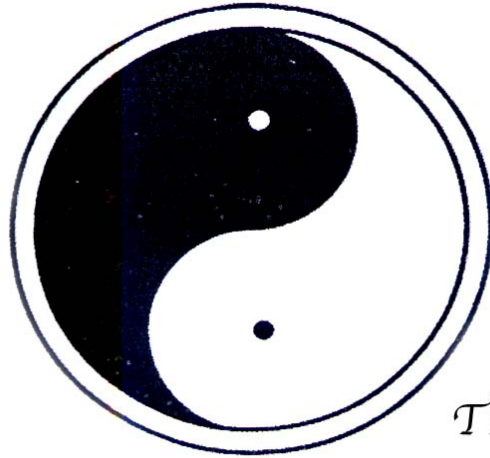
interplay of exertion and rest. The Hsien intuited and understood the symbiotic relationship of these two manifestations. They created a universally recognized symbol, depicting two teardrop shapes, interlocked and swimming around each other in a perfect circle. These were called Yin and Yang. One teardrop represents rest and accumulation, the other, force and action. During rest or passive states, energy accumulates; exertion uses stored energy through activity and assertion.

It is important for us to understand and know this dynamic equilibrium at work in everything. This symbol represents all duality ~ density and spaciousness, life and death, hot and cold, wet and dry, hard and soft, man and woman, stone and water, sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the nervous system, etc. The translated original Hsien description of Yin and Yang. *Yin: The accumulation and storage of energy*, and *Yang: the use of the stored energy*. When Yin is full, Yang has deep reserves to draw from, creating and sustaining human vitality. Conversely, if Yin is not properly fortified, and your energy becomes depleted, you run the risk of deficiency during exertion.

Cells of living organisms are storage units as well as producers of energy; they absorb energy, and release or use it when needed. Yin is in-taking and holding; Yang is release. We can evaluate health by viewing Yin and Yang from this perspective, Yin is moist and cooling, and Yang is dry and warming.

Yang

*The use
of energy*



Yin

*The accumulation
and storage
of energy*

A small dot of the opposite color, or quality, is present in each teardrop representing the inclusive relationship of the two elemental forces. The dots are crucial, as the Hsien realized that without a small portion of the opposite energy inside, the larger forces might split apart antagonistically. A small amount of Yin must be inherent in Yang energy to prevent over-drying and overheating. Conversely, a little Yang must be present in Yin to avoid over-cooling and accumulation of excess moisture.

These polarities exist in the dualistic forces, all manifestations on Earth and in our consciousness. They

maintain the dance of the opposites. The bliss and the abyss live side by side, and if we are following the circadian rhythms of life, we will maintain equilibrium with the manifestation of dualistic forces. This realization is very important, as it is the foundation of the philosophy of the Gate of Life lineage.

The world at the time of the early Hsien was pristine, and sparsely populated. There were clans of hunter-gatherers, and paleontology reveals their diets were omnivorous; eating what they could find, which included berries, flowers, grasses, seeds, tubers, resins, leaves, fruits, herbs and animals. Worldwide paleontology samples of hunter-gatherer bones reveal they had none of today's diseases.^{vii}

There was no pollution or environmental degradation. They were "symbionts", who lived harmoniously with the web of life. They found that herbs, along with their broad-spectrum diets, nourished their bodies and strengthened their minds, bringing them to a state of health referred to as "beyond danger."

Shen Nong and the Gate of Life School

Ancient Chinese folklore can help shed light on the early development of an herbal system. There are tales of humans learning from animals, for instance; a deer was observed in the woods with a fractured bone, chewing on the bark of a

certain tree. This was noted and when someone later suffered a bone fracture, followed the actions of the deer and consumed some of the bark. The injury healed sooner than it otherwise might have, and a discovery was made. The herb reportedly used is today called *Eucommia (Du zhong)*, and is the most prominent bone, tendon and ligament supporting substance in Chinese herbalism.

In another folktale, sheep herders noticed their animals congregated around a certain kind of tree and ate the leaves just before mating season. People tried the leaves and noticed a stimulating effect on their libido, making another discovery. This herb is called *Epimedium (Yin yang huo)*, or “Horny Goat Weed,” found in convenience store supplements, sold as “natural Viagra.”

Medicine men and women came to hold this knowledge, becoming specific purveyors of these herbs for their clans; Shamanism was born. With the advent of larger village populations, diseases began to appear; shamans soon had a clientele. Shamanism became one of the first sciences. Herbalists searched the forests to discover new healing substances, for dressing wounds, assisting delivery of babies, strength and vitality, and many other uses.

By approximately 5000 BP, Chinese culture advanced with the development of writing. This coincided with the appearance of China’s first Emperor, Shen Nong, a legendary figure who was called the “Divine Farmer,” as he is reputed to have invented the plow, modernizing agriculture. Shen Nong is said to have presented the five grains to the people, reducing the need to eat meat. He is

credited as the first to document and classify therapeutic uses of herbs.

It is said Shen Nong studied and tasted thousands of plants, and classified 365 health-enhancing minerals and plant parts in the first known herbal pharmacopoeia, called *Shennong Bencao Jing*, or “The Divine Farmer’s Classic.”^{viii} Many of the herbs I will discuss were first documented in Shen Nong’s manual, including Reishi Mushroom, Shizandra, Goji, Gastrodia, Eucommia, and others. With the magnificent scope of this information, it is likely Shen Nong sourced much of his research, technical data and herbal properties from the work of his Hsien ancestors.



Shen Nong, approx. 4975 BP

Shen Nong is often depicted as an old man in a grass skirt, sitting on the ground by a twig hut, with baskets of herbs surrounding a small hole in the ground. He is maintaining a fire pit ~ cooking herbs in a clay pot.

Shortly after Shen Nong created his Pharmacopeia, a school arose around these precepts, and an oral tradition of Master-pupil apprenticeship ensued, which was called the “Gate of Life” school, or lineage, and has continued to this day. The Gate of Life refers to an area in the lower back just between the kidneys, called the solar plexus, which the Taoist health masters believe is the life-force center of the human body. Our source of energy is the solar plexus, and we work from there to cultivate homeostasis.

During its early days, this new health system was maintained in intellectual circles, while alchemists researched elixirs of life. The study of Herbology in China gradually became sophisticated and recognized as society advanced; medical professionals emerged, and a medicinal system developed. Another important book was published by 3500 BP. *The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine* describes acupuncture, acupressure, and incorporates many new herbs determined to counter disease. It also introduced the I-Ching as a medium of divination to help identify health conditions and their causes (only a handful of Chinese doctors are still versed in the use of the I-Ching in healthcare). This new medical system was more complex than Shen Nong’s manual. The herbal formulas and healing techniques documented in *The Yellow Emperor’s* manual were administered to the general population, while the

Tonic herbs of the Hsien lineage continued to be used by the elite. During some dynasties, the most revered tonic herbs, including ginseng and reishi, were used only by the royal family.

The science of Herbology, mysticism and physical therapy, spawned a group of healers called Fangshi, who were ideologically akin to shamans. Fangshi were described as “Those versed in interpreting omens,” and who possessed “magical recipes.”^{ix} A Fangshi also incorporated alchemy, astrology, divinization, magic, and practitioners could be monks, mystics, technologists or visionaries. Some Fangshi, including Hong Zao, made great contributions to early Chinese medicine. Another famous Fangshi, Zao Yan (2305 to 2240 BP), was said to have further developed the science behind the symbol of Yin and Yang, and to have described the five element theory used today in Chinese medicine. Both of these men are said to have created elixirs of immortality, and were sought after by the Imperial courts to concoct health potions for the Emperor.

Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty searched for Zao Yan to drink his elixir of immortality, but his sentries never found the old recluse. Legends state the hermits were reluctant to reveal their immortal elixir recipes, which only further intrigued the Imperial class to learn these secrets; what was uncovered was kept in private hands. Little written documentation is found on Tonic herbs and their system of use. The Gate of Life became an elite and secret health system, and this is why we have only recently heard of these precepts; my teacher Master Teegarden learned

from Master Park, becoming the first westerner ever to learn the Taoist health teachings.

Various health philosophies coalesced to form the precepts of Taoism. In 2500 BP, the ageing Lao Tzu, a keeper of records at the Imperial library, intended to ride away into the desert as his last act, and was stopped by a gate keeper. The guard, knowing of Lao Tzu, asked him to write some of his wisdom before leaving. The old man quickly wrote fifty-one poems, then remounted his yak, and legend says he rode into the scorched desert, never to return. The writings he left constitute a deep treasure of wisdom ~ one of the most revered books ever written.

I was changed after reading the *Tao Te Ching* (closest translation, the Way of Life). As a confused twenty-one year old, I was troubled and lost. I met an older Chinese woman, who guided me to my true path (at the time I did not know it). She gave me a copy of the *Tao Te Ching*. Whitter Bynner's translation of this little book facilitated my reversal from a less-conscious existence, to the present life I have now.^x

Lao Tzu drew from precepts already developed for more than 2400 years, and infused them into a simple philosophy on life, but it was the Hsien and early shamans living in China's five sacred Mountains that assembled the core concepts of Chinese philosophy. Their passion for health and longevity, and their quest to live with integrity gave Lao Tzu his impetus.

Chinese civilization subsequently experienced the longest and most productive period of art, science,

technology, health, and sophisticated culture in all human history.

During the Tang Dynasty (1200-1600 BP), tea houses were frequented, where young people discussed philosophy and their innovations and inventions. The Imperial family decreed that if anyone from any class, discovered an herb or herbal combination that benefitted health, the person's family would receive honor and elevation of social status. Anyone who devised a useful new invention could receive the same benefits. Poetry was designated as the national pastime, and some of the most beautiful poems in literature were written. An era of innovation thrived in the healing arts, and in other fields.

The Imperial families were using tonic herbs, which included Reishi mushroom. It was reportedly discovered by the imperial architects when a strange mushroom grew from a ceiling beam in the first Chamber of the Forbidden Palace. This auspicious sign led the Emperors to take tea of this mushroom, which came to be called Lingzhi, which means "Herb of spiritual immortality," and is said to impart a peaceful and enlightened countenance. Lingzhi is also famous as a longevity tonic. Modern research reveals it as a premier immuno-modulating herb.



Lingzhi, also known by its Japanese name Reishi.

Zao Yan's coveted elixir of immortality was also said to contain Lingzhi mushroom, and he spoke of great mountain, Penglai Shan, where the mushroom grew. Emperor Wu sent expeditions to find this mountain, unsuccessfully. Ge Hong (Ko Hung) was also an early alchemist who created an elixir of immortality he called *Cinnabar Gold Elixir*. The recipe was lost, but may have contained Lingzhi, as one variety of the mushroom is referred to as Cinnabar Gold Lingzhi. Reishi is indicated as a significant element of the great era of peace and enlightenment, the Golden Age of China.

Another tonic herb gained popularity around this time. At around 1200 BP, An old man named Mr. Ho had no children and was determined to regain his youth. He experimented with roots and preparations to find a rejuvenation tonic. He simmered the root of Ho sho wu (*lat. Polygonum multiflorum*) with black beans, and his hair reportedly returned to black. Hence the name which means

“Old man Ho with the black hair.” Return of natural hair color indicates replenishment of the kidneys and adrenals.

In 1580, Li Shizhen completed an official Chinese herbal *Materia Medica*, harmonizing divergent information on herbs’ actions and removing superstition and erroneous material.

Centuries passed, and the Golden Age waned; a new period began in 1928 when Chang Kai Chek rode into Peking with armored helmet and military gear in a gasoline powered limousine. The Chinese people rejected his efforts to democratize, capitalize and build military might, leading to Mao Tse Tung, who expelled the Westerners, with their opium and imperialism.

The recent Communist government installed a pharmaceutical industry, and built modern westernized medical clinics throughout rural provinces. People came, curious to try this new medicine, and quickly rejected it.^{xi} Modern Chinese medicine has advanced in technology along with the west, but the herbal medicine practices have remained as popular as ever. Modern research has only confirmed herbs’ healing properties; recent analysis has proven the accuracy of the ancient Master’s knowledge.

Little is known in the West about the herbal aspects of the traditional Chinese health system. It is now essential to re-integrate this ancient wisdom, to give balance and perspective to modern health technologies and ideas.

Chapter Two

Taoist Philosophy

In his opening poem from the *Tao te Ching*, Lao Tzu aptly writes of the difficulty of using words to describe the Tao:

Existence is beyond the power of words
To define:
Terms may be used
But none of them are absolute.
In the beginning of heaven and earth there were no words,
Words came out of the womb of matter;
And whether a man dispassionately sees to the core of life
Or passionately
Sees the surface,
The core and the surface are essentially the same,
Words making them seem different
Only to express appearance.
If name be needed, wonder names them both:
From wonder to wonder
Existence opens.^{xii}

Taoism is misunderstood and misaligned outside of those who study it, know and live by its precepts. There is an erroneous notion that Taoist thought began with Lao Tzu's writing of the *Tao Te Ching* in 2500 BP. In the West, small groups of intellectuals discussed its virtues beginning in the 1940's, when Witter Bynner and Lin Yutang published

excellent translations, and earlier influence is evident in the writings of Thoreau and Emerson. James Legge published a beautiful translation of the Tao Te Ching in 1891.

Taoist precepts run counter to western culture, especially capitalist ideology. Some critics in the West have regarded Taoism with scorn. Edward Herbert wrote in *The Confucian Notebook*, "Taoism is a synonym for superstition and imposture." Deeper exploration of Taoism reveals an ancient, insightful philosophy of invaluable knowledge. Origins can be traced in the study of Tonic Herbalism, where Taoist principles initiated, at a time that predates Lao Tzu's writing by approximately 2500 years.

The following is an abridged version of Fabrizio Delgado's introduction in *Encyclopedia of Taoism*.

The Tao is called a Primal energy, nothing existed before it and everything is manifested out of it. It has no form, but can take on any form. No one can claim to know it, yet, being the source of everything, it is inexhaustible and endless. This presents a paradox; how can it not be known yet is everything. Its virtue and efficacy nourishes life and well-being.

The Tao has an indeterminate totality and receptive unity on one side, and existence as organic diversity on the other, thus encompassing the Yin and Yang. Understanding it requires unifying spirit and will. The goal is to find one's original nature and pristine simplicity; the authentic state of things, which the Taoists sometimes call "The great clod." This is related to an intuitive vision of the world as a unified

whole, and a perception of the value of the natural strength (Qi) of all life.

It is an intuitive, personal, and sometimes mystical awareness that goes beyond conceptual thought, and social or moral practices or doctrines.

The closest western translation of the word “Tao” is *the road*, or *the way*. It is our life’s path ~ which is a unique journey for every person. This is what distinguishes Taoism from religions. Each one of us has a unique path, requiring an individual quest and personal revelations. It may not serve our true growth and unfolding to be coerced into following a path designed by others, many which are institutionalized and politicized. Taoism is not a religion, though it is sometimes perceived as one.

The Tao is the path of our destiny ~ cosmic, spiritual, vocational, social and familial. We hope to find the best course; a clear direction that leads us to our most abundant possibilities. We all want to be happy and fulfilled. The quest for fulfillment is the Tao, but our true destiny could be different than what we imagine. The path of the Tao is one of balance and equity, and could be solitary or in the throngs of civilization.

Religions attempt to penetrate the mystery of human suffering and prosperity, and why these polarities appear to play out in confounding ways. For instance, a scoundrel might effortlessly acquire wealth and live in opulence, while the mendicant of compassion and humble service to humanity may experience difficulties, and live a life of

hardship and poverty. The Tao is, on one hand, about these distinctions, and then it is not, as the Taoist masters taught that both extremes are essentially the same; our challenge is to maintain a centered position between them. The bliss and the abyss exist with each other; we keep our health, both physically and spiritually, by remaining unattached to either extreme. If we let them pass as water flows, without judgment, then we are in the Tao. Lao Tzu wrote of the fearless man; “By never being an end in himself, he endlessly becomes himself.”

The Tao is the path of wisdom, and choice, as it presents itself. “The way to know is to be,” as Lao Tzu said. The Taoists believe the way to live is in the center of the dualistic forces of life they call Yin and Yang; the Tao is the center point. The tonic herbs help us balance our energies to hold stasis in that center, where we are fluid yet immovable. The ancient Hsien masters found this through purification of the body and mind. If we have clear channels of the flow of vital life force, called Chi, and our minds are nourished by seeds of wisdom, we will stay centered and intuit the best choices for ourselves.

Finding our own path is paramount. Those who plant their feet most firmly on that course make it to their destination, be it a place, mindset, or realization.

There is individual destiny and collective human destiny, as a species or race of beings. Finding your inner Tao is not easy with all the distractions of media, recreational pursuits and professional demands, as well as social and cultural conditioning. The separation of our modern culture from

communion and reverence with nature has not been healthy, and impedes us from knowing our instinctive way to fulfillment. This detour from our path may be distressing for those of us who feel it. But it may also be part of a larger equation, as I will explain later.

Taoist health philosophy is oriented to aid the mendicant in developing the capacity to find and begin progressing down his or her true road, or to find the strongest branch of the tree, and in having the tenacity to reach the most abundant destination—maybe not the most abundant in terms of wealth, prestige, and such: or maybe so... Each of us finds out what our life's path has in store.

Thomas Merton lived alone in a cabin on a monastery in Kentucky without speaking for twenty years before writing his books. Solitary or monastic environments were considered necessary for spiritual enlightenment by most religions from earliest records. For most of us, the challenges we encounter in daily life help us learn and grow, and are often in our own psyche.

The Aquarian age has brought technological society, disseminating information and knowledge much faster and broader than previous eras. The way of the ascetic, sequestered away from civilization, may no longer be advantageous or practical for spiritual studies, though for some people may still be desirable.

The precepts of Taoism are very accessible now, and can be learned and applied in concert with modern cultural milieu. It is important for you to be where you are ~ for the Tao has put you there; the Tao is your center. When you

follow the Tao, the bliss and the abyss are the same. In ecstasy, you remain centered; when confronted by difficulty, you are calm and courageous. This strength will have profound impact on your health, and your potential to live a long and vibrant life and possibly attain great wisdom.

The ancients believe maintaining excellent health is key for this true path to be navigated most effectively. Pre-Taoist visionaries taught pure and radiant health supports a state-of-being that is physically “beyond danger.” If spiritually perceptive too, these combined qualities inform us with the subtle signs we receive, to intuitively make wise choices.

This is why the path of the Tao must, by necessity, be physical and conscious, *as well as* an intuitive and spiritual path. Only with these observances can we reach our full potential. When evolution opens our intuitive perception *en masse*—which I believe is beginning to unfold at this time—we will no longer be separated, and will all know the way to highest realization.

Taking the ascetic route on the Taoist path may be a challenging task. One should never think that by choosing this road that life will become easier and adversity will be overcome; this may not be the case. In fact, the reverse may occur for a period. When you enter your road of the Tao, you may experience an acceleration of karma; challenges of the bliss and the abyss may intensify. Accumulations of old karmic imprints may surface for you to reconcile. These energies may be associated with the sign of Chiron ~ the wounded healer. Chiron’s message is that our healing must

be given selflessly and without want of prestige or recognition.

As you become a healer, seeking the balanced path of the Tao, manifestations in your life may compel you to cleanse your body, and to work harder to remove “psychic baggage” obstructing abundance. When we do not manage our health, imbalance can occur, opening the door for disease.

The Pre-Taoists worked to develop a system of health cultivation that assists our perseverance toward vibrant life. That journey, without judgement, is called The Tao.

Optimum condition is obtained through our diets and lifestyle, and other choices. When we eat high vibration organic foods, consumed in their living state, maintaining a pure diet of foods containing living enzymes and minerals, probiotics and the right fats, pure drinking water, and if we are physically active, then we will maintain a healthy body. We may need to cleanse our systems occasionally with various kinds of fasts and consultation with a health practitioner for a personalized diet. With a clearer body and mind, we learn to embrace reverence for all life, including the vegetable and animal life we may consume. When combining these practices with Tonic herbal teas, we have what I believe is the ultimate health regimen. The Tao will reveal itself to us. Knowledge from our inquiries, and our intuition will provide accelerating insights for our health and well-being, and personal evolution ~ then we can be guides for others in discovering the way to their most abundant possibilities.

The title “Master” in Taoism is highly regarded and not easily attained. Only an existing Master can endow a suitable prospect with the title ~ who has spent decades in study of the pure Tao. My teacher has been on the Taoist path for thirty five years and still uses his title cautiously, as he knows how profoundly knowledgeable are the great Masters of China. Their intense life disciplines have shown them the way to the Tao; we humble ourselves in appreciation of their wisdom.

We call ourselves Taoist herbalists because we can guide others to herbal substances that work beneficially as a component in the diet, so that the body is fortified at its roots. When we cultivate this degree of “health beyond danger,” we are ready to become *The Light*, and it is then that we will be ready to help others. We must begin with ourselves, to cleanse the body, nourish it, and then tonify its deepest recesses.

As you progress through life from the Taoist perspective, the bliss and abyss will narrow and level out. The opposites of Yin and Yang will come to maintain balance ~ when you achieve this, you will be a Taoist Master. You will know the silence of the forest; you will hold your inner balance in the middle of a city. Your teachers ~ spirit guides, known and unknown teachers, mentors and sometimes strangers will appear to give you the messages you need. These guides, inner and outer, and your own assimilation of the truths I am going to reveal, will reward you with some insights while on your journey.

When you find an inner humble silence, ready to give healing wisdom without thinking of compensation, you will be entering the Tao. Like a sturdy branch of a great tree, you will be ready to drop your seeds on the ground for others to collect. When you are in center-place of the Tao, it won't matter so much what happens to your seed once you have dropped it, it may nourish someone, or become bits of a birds nest. You may sell it to another or keep it in your seed bank until you are ready to plant. Regardless, you will know that the seed contains a truth that cannot be corrupted; whatever is done with it will make it no more or less of a truth. You will be there to drop the seed, and the more of it is taken, the more remains. This is the Tao.

The seed of truth that flows through you will drop from your hands at the right time ~ effortlessly ~ and you will not seek accolades for your work. The tree or plant needs no thanking for this act; it does this anyway, not concerned about what is done with the seeds, for they contain the truth; that life is a universal template that is interwoven and interdependent, and that no part is more important or privileged than another. The tree might ask you to water it, ask us to pray for rain that everything will be nourished; the tree also wants you around to carry its seed somewhere else. What you do with it will depend on where you are on your path.

Chapter Three

Distinctions Between Foods and Herbs

When we refer to something as a food, we are describing a substance that we can masticate, salivate and digest, and through internal processes, assimilate its nutrients and minerals into vital energy and cellular mass. For food to provide energy efficiently, the body must be healthy to effectively transform and utilize nutrients for energy or structure.

The energy source of all our food is the plant kingdom. Concentration in meat and fish is derived from the plant, algae, bacteria and fungi, consumed by the animal. Carnivorous fish and animals eat insects and other animal life that have plant-based diets, for the most part. Granted, there are some omnivorous and carnivorous species in plant, animal and insect families.

The majority of vegetables and grains we eat are plants called annuals, meaning that their full growth cycle of germination, fruiting, seeding and dieback occurs within one or two seasons. A handful of our edible plant staples, including some brassicas and some tomatoes, are biannual, producing edible portions for a few years. Due to

hybridization and extensive cultivation, these biannual plants usually only produce vibrant edible parts in the first season, and in commercial agriculture, are cut away for replanting after harvesting the first crop. These annual plants comprise most of our cultivars; the familiar grocery store varieties.

An onion is planted from a seed and within about four months has grown underground into a root tuber. We eat it after four or five months of growth, and if left in the ground longer, its phyto-chemistry changes to starchy material. At maturity, it will send its reproductive energy into the stalk. The stored carbohydrates will begin “lignifying” into structural proteins, and the stalk will harden in order to hold up a seed pod. Then a beautiful spherical tuft of flowers will sprout and produce seeds that fall to the ground around the plant, to be transported by wind, animals and insects. If the flowers were pollinated by bees and other insects, or through cross pollination, and if the original seed was not manipulated by humans to prevent its re-germination, new onions will sprout the following year; all will begin again.

When onions are eaten at their ripe, sugary stage, we can easily chew and release nutrients from the cellulose and primarily through enzymes in the stomach, duodenum and small intestine, assimilate the easily digestible carbohydrates, proteins and minerals for energy and structure.

The forces that enabled this tuber to grow so quickly are called enzymes, which are proteins that catalyze or increase the rate of chemical reactions. They are by-products of photo-synthesis, sunlight, and magnetic electrical elements

derived from water and soil. These enable the growing plant to collect nutrition that our bodies can use. Many enzymes are heat sensitive, losing potency with cooking. This means we should eat a considerable percentage of our food raw, or extract the juices with a juicing machine. When preparing foods, low heat or brief flash-cooking is best, like the Chinese do in woks, and avoid overcooking, so that the food retains some of its enzymatic life-force.

We should choose foods that are ripe and succulent. Annual cultivars from organic and local growers are the best choices usually to ensure foods are high in these living energies. Purity and diversity are also important. Many store-bought vegetables and fruits are harvested unripened, to survive the transport time to distant warehouses, often on other continents. These foods are less nutritious than local and regionally grown produce because of growing methods and loss of vitality over time. Picked ripe from our back yard or purchased from local farmers is ideal.

Herbs are classified in a different category because the majority of them are not from annual plant origins; most are derived from perennial plants, which continue to grow year after year. All bushes and trees are perennials. Many herbs are derived from small bushy perennials, due to the concentration of their nutrients. Some herbs collected from large trees, including eucalyptus and magnolia, can also be very potent when used properly, but herbs from perennial bushes are generally more powerful.

A perennial plant has different phyto-chemistry than a vegetable or fruit, often more complex. Having lived through many seasons, its constituents are denser and bitter tasting. This is because the perennial plant must adapt to changes in climate ~ sometimes extreme ~ from cold and icy to hot, windy, rainy, and through dry spells. Plants we call herbs must withstand all these conditions to survive, whereas our vegetable cultivars could not endure such extremes. We have made it easy for cultivars to grow until harvesting time. By cultivating food plants to taste sweet and remain soft and succulent, humans have taken away their adaptability, until most of our crops cannot withstand living in wild conditions. We shuffled their genes, starting a long time ago, and in the process, made their survival dependent on our maintenance.

Most herbs remain genetically closer to their wild state. For their natural defenses, they contain the same complex phyto-nutrients that we can consume to help increase our defensive powers, adaptability, anti-microbial, etc. Wild foods have developed self-defense properties and stronger reproductive potential. Varieties of weeds can grow in the most desolate locations, without any help but rainfall and sunlight. This is the endurance quality we look for in herbs; to withstand adversity and thrive in disturbed and depleted soils. Invasive and copious growth indicates a strong life-force.

As the plant lives through seasons, it develops internally protective chemicals that strengthen it. If boring insects penetrate bark, they are repelled by a bitter sap. If

nematodes attempt to invade a plant's rhizomes or roots, they will be fended off by anti-parasitic chemicals. For the plant to survive against higher odds, it must develop protective agents. Humans discovered long ago that taking these herbs can also help protect us in similar ways; the anti-fungal plant chemical helps us fight off fungal overload.

Many of the inherent chemicals are classified with more complex names – polyphenols, polysaccharides, mucopolysaccharides, also known as glucosaminoglycans, triterpenes, beta-glucans, and apigenin-7-apiosylglucoside, found in aloe vera.

Additionally, chemicals or combinations of plant constituents known to produce various effects on the body are nervines, adaptogens, sedatives, carminatives, purgatives, analgesics, anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial agents, demulcents, laxatives, and the primary class of herbs we focus on in the Gate of Life lineage; tonic herbs.

Chinese herbology includes roots, bark, branches, and other perennial plant parts. Most of the herbs in the Chinese Pharmacopoeia are wild perennials; many can be highly invasive. This is due to their vibrant life force and strong reproductive abilities. These qualities are what the ancient Chinese looked for in plants that could benefit our health. Emphasis on perennial root herbs distinguishes the Chinese system from European herbology, which utilizes more leaves. *Leaves treat the surface; roots go deeper.* This is one of the reasons the Chinese herbal system is so beneficial. Ayurvedic and Amazonian medicine also utilizes many plant stems, bark and roots.

As an example of the difference between foods and herbs, we can evaluate the herb Ginseng, which is found in the same genetic family with carrots. A carrot grows under ground approximately three months; a ginseng root may live in the wilds for fifty years or more. After eight years of growth in the wild, a ginseng root becomes almost invincible to the elements. It develops “adaptogenic” properties, able to fend off bio-marauders, and can withstand climate extremes. In Asia, mature ginseng roots are highly valued, and can cost thousands of dollars.

While we can pull a fresh carrot out of the ground and eat it raw, this is not usually the case with herbs. Where the cellulose of the annual cultivar is still juicy and pliable, the wild herbal perennial plant must develop a tougher skin to survive in its environment. After the first year of growth, the soft green shoot must “harden” its stems to survive, wet, dry, freezing and windy conditions. Its cellular structures form lignin proteins, hardening into wood. The internal plant fluids become encased in the cellulose of these woody structures. As the plant hardens over the years, its fluids are further protected from incursion by boring insects, and becomes more difficult for human or animal consumption to ingest and assimilate.

Perhaps long ago, in the hunter-gatherer period, we may have been able to digest wood and rocks, but our digestive systems have become softened by the cooking and preparation of our foods. Lignin cellulose is impenetrable by our gastric fluids; it’s hard to chew up a piece of wood. The

phyto-chemicals we seek must be released and rendered bio-available to us.

Ancient indigenous people on many continents discovered that boiling herbs in water would soften the woody structures, releasing nutrients into the liquid. This process is called “hydrolysis;” rendering into liquid. The ancient Chinese realized this is the same process that occurs in our stomachs; we break down ingested food into a liquid and derive the nutrients while this “chyme” passes through the duodenum and small intestine. By heating a liquid with the herbs immersed, they are pre-hydrolyzed, sparing our stomachs the effort to digest, allowing easy absorption of the nutrients while in the digestive tract. This was a significant discovery ~ the unlocked nutrients formed a “chai” or “tea,” and consumption of herbal elixirs was born.

Many times I am asked why these herbs can't be eaten raw, and whether the cooking of herbs diminishes their nutrition. Thousands of years of effective use, in addition to modern research, shows the effective properties are released into the fluid without being destroyed by heat. When we boil an herb, it does lose some enzymatic potency. Enzymes are in our foods, fresh, raw or gently cooked, for the basic dietary nutrients we need. Herbs provide deeper, more complex agents. These phyto-chemicals withstand environmental extremes, including the heat and pressure of cooking, and are rendered bio-available in this way. These are called “Extremophilic” phyto-chemicals, and also allow

living materials to survive interplanetary transport, eventually seeding other planets.³

Quality of food and water is very important and the use of herbs can greatly enhance our health and well-being. Herbs give us protective and adaptive agents that support regulatory functions in our bodies and strengthen forces that are embedded in our genetic potential. There is an energetic and genetic transferal through generations. All the actions, interactions, lifestyles and experiences of our ancestors, are encoded in us energetically and genetically. They have shaped our cosmological profile and propensities, and to some degree, the health and adaptability we experience. Our genetic inheritance can go back to our species' origins.

In our current world, pollution, poor quality food, lack of creativity and inspiration, stress, low self-esteem, etc., are depriving us of the vitality our ancestors may have enjoyed. The Taoist masters believe we can revitalize our lives, possibly reclaiming "health beyond danger." The Gate of Life lineage promotes attainment and maintenance of excellent health through pure food, pure air, pure water, pure thoughts, loving intentions, and Tonic herbs.

The three classes of Chinese herbs

The Chinese herbal pharmacopoeia is divided into three categories; the superior herbs are called Tonic herbs, the

³ See Astrobiology.

second is the regulating class, and the third, most inferior group, are poisonous.

Tonic herbs; the superior class

Tonic herbs support long-term strength, adaptability and resilience against susceptibility to disease; they act to balance bodily and mental energies ~ *their actions are non-specific*. The Taoist masters consider this balancing property to be superior compared to herbs that singularly depress or stimulate. Tonic herbs harmonize excess and deficiency. They are classified differently from medicinal herbs. Tonic herbs could be considered a class of superfoods. Many superfoods, such as chlorella, shilajit, royal jelly, spirulina and bee pollen could be considered tonifying foods.

The Greek root word *tonic* means, “Pertaining to, maintaining, increasing, or restoring the tone or health of the body or an organ, as a medicine,” and “Invigorating physically, mentally, or morally.” Also, the Greek word *tonify* means “to bring frequencies and musical tones into harmony.” These terms were used by Hippocrates (4th century B.C.), and appeared in the English dictionary with Paracelsus (1493-1541).

Tonic herbs comprise a minute but elite part of the approximately 3000 herbs used in TCM. Many are administered by so-called “barefoot doctors”⁴ of rural China,

⁴ A tradition of rural doctors walking barefoot through all seasons; snow and freezing temperatures, while visiting their patients, to show that they are impervious to cold and flu.

with 300 to 500 herbs in the regular Chinese herbal pharmacopoeia.^{xiii}

The Tonic herbs are the superior group of the three classes, comprising only 50 to 70 herbs. A Tonic herb must meet three criteria:

1. It must be proven safe for long-term daily consumption, and fortify the whole constitution over time.
2. It must have a broad-spectrum beneficial action on the body. It must contain “dual-directional” energies, helping bring the total organism into balance between the forces of Yin and Yang.
3. It must benefit more than one of the Three Treasures and the five major organ systems.

Since the dawn of herbalism, Tonic herbs have been recognized to possess important properties. Today, the Chinese medical authorities study many plants from around the world for their curative properties, and on rare occasion discover a tonifying herb. For example, *Gynostemma (Jiao gu lan)* has attained recognition in the Tonic herbal hierarchy. *Gynostemma* had been widely used in remote regions of southern China for centuries, but was not included in the Chinese herbal pharmacopoeia until the 1970's, after extensive research by the Chinese and Japanese. *Tribulus (Ji li)* from Bulgaria is another herb that has recently been declared to tonify *yang*. It is now a sought-after herb for athletic and sexual strength. *Ashwaganda*, *Rhodiola*, *Suma*, *Sasparilla* and *Gotu Kola* are herbs that tonify. *Fritillaria* is considered part tonic, part medicinal. The blood building

herb Dang gui (*Lat. Angelica sinensis*) almost meets the three criteria, and is considered a semi-tonic, as is Ligusticum (*Gao ben*).

The second class: regulating herbs

These herbs are used for specific therapeutic applications, such as cleansing the liver and blood of toxins, cooling excess bodily heat or warming coldness. They only benefit one organ meridian, and may not act as beneficially on another organ system. Regulating herbs are used for a limited time, only until the adverse conditions have subsided. They act more quickly to adjust an imbalance within the body or spirit, and ideally, once equilibrium has been restored, the Tonic herbs are then applied for maintenance afterward, to prevent the imbalance from recurring.

The regulating herbs are an important component of TCM Herbology. They can be very helpful when quick relief is needed, and their empirical use over time had proven to be effective, and safe when used properly. Some regulating herbs are considered mainstays of the Chinese medical system. Examples include *Scutellaria bicallensis* (*huang qun*), *Gentiana*, *Magnolia bud and bark*, and raw *Rehmannia* (*Sheng di huang*).

Many herbs in the Western herbal pharmacopoeia would be considered regulating class herbs. Valerian is a good example: used for the singular purpose of aiding sleep. Skullcap leaf is a nervine for anxiety and hypertension. Kava

would be used for the same reasons. Blue Cohosh may help women during troublesome menstrual periods. Yellow Dock is excellent for skin blemishes. Milk thistle helps cleanse the liver. Goldenseal and Echinacea help fend off infections, colds and flu.

Regulating class herbs may produce unintended and negative side effects if not administered according to proper guidelines. Chaparral cleanses the blood but it may also harm the liver if used excessively. Lobelia was used in early colonial America to induce vomiting, and came under scrutiny in the mid-1800's for reportedly being dangerous,⁵ but such claims were never proven. Ephedra is a regulating class herb, and is effective in warming and expelling dampness in the lungs. It can cause dehydration if not combined properly with other herbs. This valuable herb was misused in weight loss products, and came under scrutiny by western health authorities. This underscores the need to understand and follow properly established time-tested protocols when using and administering herbs.

Generally, the Chinese herbal medical system is very safe and gentle. Safety is a major concern of the Chinese medical authorities, and contraindications of the herbs have been well-documented. Herbs of the 2nd and 3rd class are rarely used alone, but are found in herbal formulations developed

⁵ Samuel Johnson used Lobelia extensively, gaining great popularity. His work angered the allopathic doctors, who wrongly accused him of killing someone with Lobelia. No proof was presented of this claim in a courtroom battle, and Thompson was released from jail. Afterward, Lobelia remained listed as a potentially dangerous herb.

over many years, or centuries, where numerous herbs are combined to create a more synergistic effect than any one herb can accomplish, and to reduce side effects. If herbs are compounded according to the Chinese Materia Medica, and practiced according to established protocols, there is low possibility for side effects. Students interested in this field, can enroll in schools of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Many of these schools exist in North America. Acupuncture, moxibustion, acupressure and other Eastern health modalities are included in the curriculums at most TCM schools.

The third class: the poisons

These herbs are used only by experienced health professionals in China. They are used with extreme caution, many according to the principles of Homeopathy, where substances are diluted to such minute fractions that there is literally no physical matter left in the solution, leaving only an energetic imprint, or signature of frequencies that can stimulate dormant mechanisms in the body.

It is advisable to refrain from attempting to cure people of ailments, and instead direct them toward a capable doctor of Chinese, Ayurvedic or Western medicine. Using Tonic herbs, we may represent a kind of lay professionalism within our field, and if we are very adept, we may design herbal formulas that can help bring someone's disharmonies into balance through regulating interaction of specific body systems ~ a holistic approach that also observes the distinct

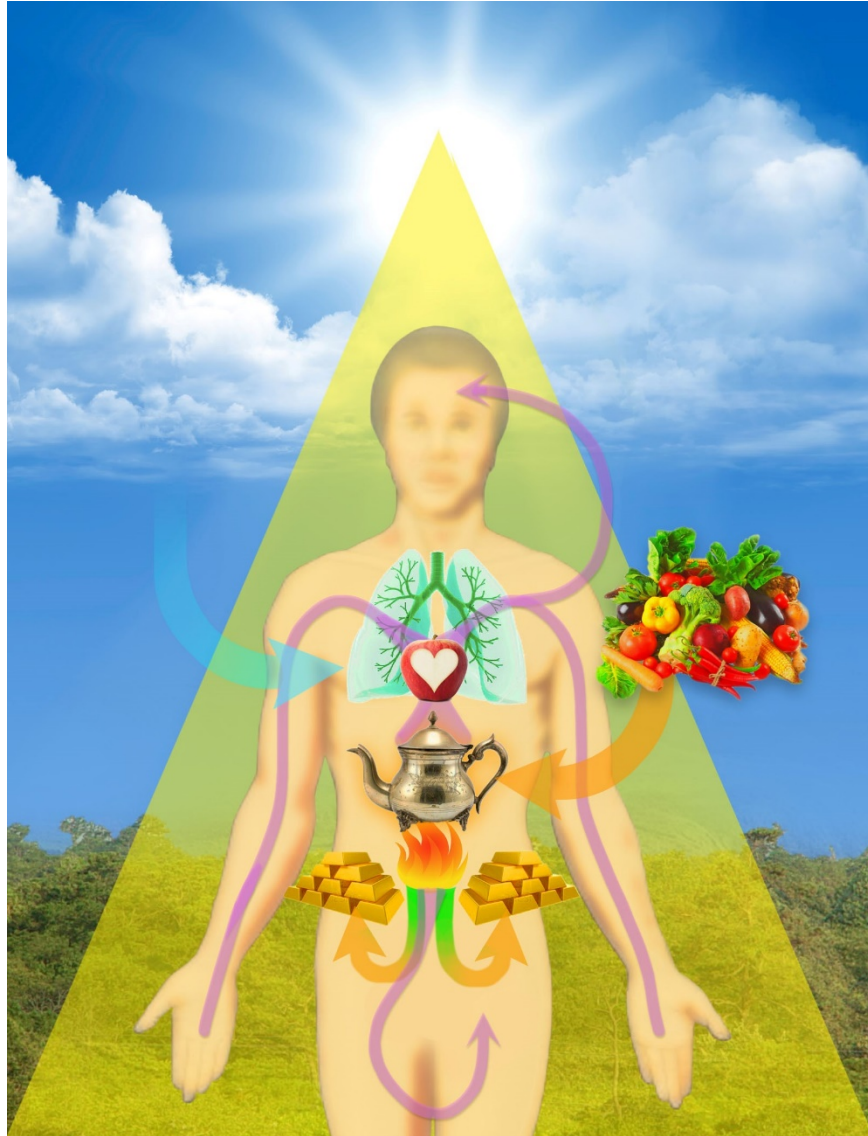
parts of the whole. Tonic herbs are the executive branch of the Chinese health system that no school in the West has yet taught exclusively; TCM curriculum includes tonic herbs, but focuses on medical and curative applications of herbs and physical therapies.

It could take years of application and observance after learning the basic precepts of herbology before mastering the art of herbal alchemy. One must study, observe and listen over time, ideally under the tutelage of a master, to learn the deeper principles of the philosophy and herbology of the Gate of Life lineage, before presenting yourself as a Tonic herbalist. Refrain from using 2nd and 3rd class herbs without some formal studies in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Tonic herbs could produce adverse effects or “contraindications” when misused or given to persons with delicate or vulnerable constitutions. TCM practitioners believe the exclusive use of Tonic herbs on persons with illness can “drive in” the malady, but we believe tonic herbal formulas can correct ill health, only taking longer.

Chapter Five

The Three Treasures



The Three Treasures in human experience

By human measure, the basic philosophy underlying Taoist health evolved over a long time-span. The master alchemists have continued to this day to study the interplay of Yin and Yang; to understand the essence of dualism. They came to interpret three basic energies that define life. These are called Jing, Chi and Shen, "The Three Treasures." They

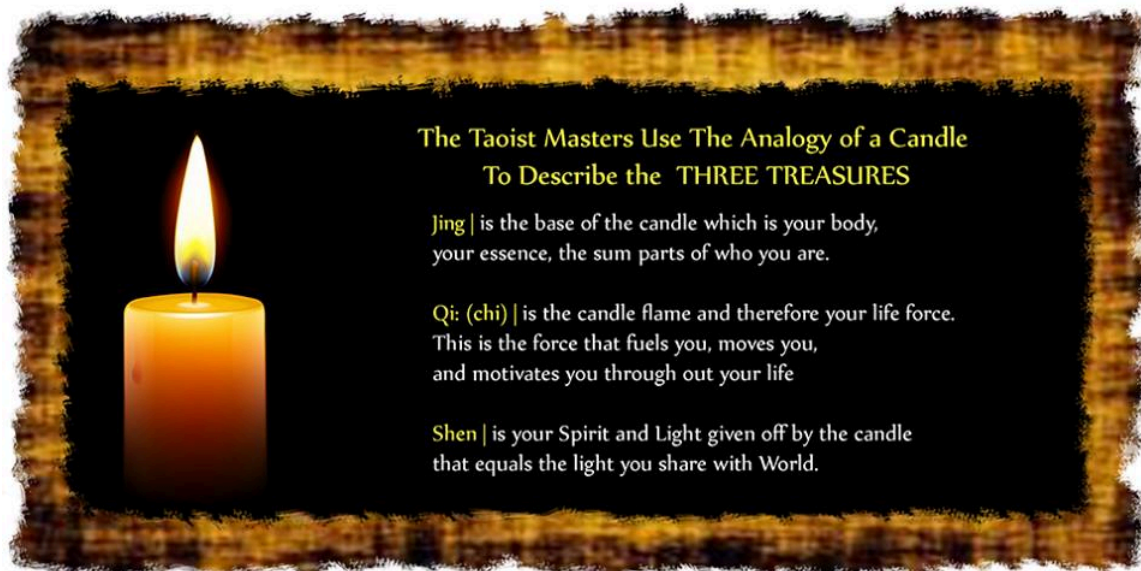
determined that if these three forces are harmonized, cultivated and protected, an individual can maintain perfect health and live a long fruitful existence, and also may cultivate a spiritual connection with their environment.

Jing is matter; living organisms, cells, physical mass of a body, and its capacity to reproduce. It is our longevity and the root vitality of our progeny.

Chi is the energy that gives animation to this body and supports its physical building blocks. Chi is transformational energy that changes the physical world; it is the *process* of evolution.

Shen is the luminescent, ethereal body and spirit; the imprint of our progression through the physical realms, and what we learned. It is the attainment of wisdom. Shen is not only the final answer to the mystery, but is also the process of the wisdom seeker. Opening Shen clears the way to enlightenment for the process of seeking to occur.

If we were to use a lit candle as a visual analogy, Jing would be the candle itself; the mass of its wax and molecular structure. Chi would be the hot flame burning at its wick, and Shen would be the illumination.



The Taoist Masters Use The Analogy of a Candle
To Describe the THREE TREASURES

Jing | is the base of the candle which is your body,
your essence, the sum parts of who you are.

Qi: (chi) | is the candle flame and therefore your life force.
This is the force that fuels you, moves you,
and motivates you through out your life

Shen | is your Spirit and Light given off by the candle
that equals the light you share with World.

Master Teegarden always had us focus on this visual analogy, for it basically depicts the essence of the Three Treasures. He was right. Reading the following explanation will plant the seed of Taoist health philosophy in your mind, but then it may take years of observing the mechanisms of life before the profundity of the Three Treasures is fully understood. Beginning then, the ways in which all life thrives will be clearer; you will see the Yin and Yang and the Three Treasures in everything that is living, and you will be able to ascertain the degree of its life-force.

Jing is the painting we view before us, Chi is the process of painting it, and Shen is the inspiration that guided the artist, and the impression left on the viewer. Jing is our past and our accumulated physical evolution. Chi is the present moment, and Shen is the future, and our potential. Jing is the savings account, Chi is the ATM, and Shen is the good we do with our wealth. Shen unfolds as we manifest the more etheric energies around and inside us. All three are

instrumental in our evolution. The Three Treasures of life are distinct energies, yet, are inter-woven and inter-dependent.

When these three energies are balanced, or *tonified*, as the Taoists say, we maintain excellent health, youthfulness, adaptability, adventure, immunity and spiritual perception. Yin and Yang energies maintain perfect equipoise and flow naturally through their circadian rhythms, with the body, mind and spirit maintaining balanced harmony. The ancient Hsien are said to have achieved this state, becoming Earthly and celestial immortals ~ with the ability to alter physical form and move into other dimensions and aspects of being at will.

Of course the actions we can experience from taking tonic herbs can be metaphoric; we can slough off some baggage, both mental and physical, which can relieve us of heaviness and greatly lighten our load so that the Tao of our lives will be easier to traverse, and our spirits can soar.

Chapter Six

Jing

Simply put, Jing is living matter and its ability to reproduce itself and the *potential* of vitality of the emerging life. Jing is the outcome of all accumulated life, and the result of the nurturing principle. Jing is the degree of vitality we pass on through generations. It is measured by the degree of our living-ness; our strength and fortitude.

Jing is an encompassing word and concept that has no singular western equivalent in its scope. It is endocrinology, health preservation, epigenetics, creative potential, adaptability, and sexual potency.

The first life forms are called the *original Jing*. According to astrobiologists, these life-spawning forces appear to come from somewhere else in the cosmos, so, we could call this “universal Jing.”

Over many eons, living things refined into a complex inter-dependent web of symbiosis ~ which spread over all the continents and through the oceans. Species adapted to the requirements of their environment with profound diversification. The life-systems that sustain us are the result of the slow refinement of Jing. We are a living vessel, and this vessel and its drives and potentiates are governed by an “essence” in every one of our trillions of cells: governance from the original Jing. This original essence will only be

understood when science reunites with intuition and spirituality.

In our personal health, the original Jing comes from our ancestors ~ our mothers and fathers most importantly ~ but also, the genetic imprints stemming from our great grandparents. After some research, I believe Jing is a four generation energy; our great grandparents laid the foundations of the health we experience. What they were doing, eating and thinking has left a resonant imprint on subsequent generations. Their lifestyle choices, health, and the environment they existed in exerted foundational influences on the degree of health we experience throughout our lives, and the potentiates of our destiny. The health and Jing imprints of our parents and grandparents are passed on to us... if they lived in a city and worked in polluted environments and ate poor quality toxic foods, this will affect the quality of health we experience. If our great grandparents were strong and lived long vibrant, disease-free lives, in a natural setting, eating fresh whole foods and drinking clean water, working in the sun, etc., then we have that integrity in our genetic imprint, and we can recover from ill health, and through diligence, regain the excellent health they enjoyed.

Our resilience against disease and sickness, our capacity to handle stress and endurance, reflects this *pre-natal Jing*. *Post-Natal Jing* is determined by how we were nourished in utero and post birthing, and throughout our early lives, and the lifestyle and dietary choices we make as adults. We pass the totality of these two branches of Jing down to our

progeny ~ for four generations; your choices will affect your great grandchildren's destinies.

The study of generational health and the effects of environment and lifestyle is called Epigenetics. In this new field, western researchers are now studying a concept that has been the core component of Taoist philosophy for thousands of years. The ancient Hsien Immortals were invincible and immortal because they had ultimate Jing. By the time the Yellow Emperor's classic appeared, people already had sickness and disease; they had less Jing.

Signs of weakness of Jing include bone decay, loss of hearing, splitting nails and lower back pain. Knee pain may also be a sign of Jing depletion. Those that can handle stress are most successful in attaining longevity. Stress will roll off of a person who has a full bank of Jing.

Jing depletion causes ageing. People who live with ailments and deficiencies, and who were born with weak dispositions, will age sooner than they might otherwise. If a person has little or no Jing, they will appear to age more rapidly; their hair will lose pigment and turn white, and they may retreat from society. They will start moving slower, cognizing slower, dragging themselves around as if half alive. They will lose their excitement and inquisitiveness, their creative inspiration and sense of wonder about life. Whole species of organisms live thrive and die out, depending on their Jing. People are losing their Jing, especially in industrialized nations. The body can't handle the onslaught of nutrient deficient, chemically laden food, environmental toxicity and constant stress. If Jing dissipates

too much, we could lose our reproductive ability and face extinction.

According to the Chinese, the bodily portal of our life force is located at the solar plexus; a point in the low-mid spine. This is the Gate of Life. The kidneys are positioned at each side of this area, and become a kind of battery holding some of this energy as Jing. The Kidney *meridian* (energy center) incorporates the adrenals and all endocrine glands, the bones, ears and hearing, hair and fingernails, as well as one's general countenance, excitement for adventure, and governs the creative and procreative drives. The Kidneys could be viewed as a gold vault ~ the repository of your personal savings account. The best way to manage a savings account is not to dip into it. So the Kidneys represent a vessel of reserve energy that you don't want to misuse or abuse; you want to save this energy to use in the future.

The saving and storing of this deep vitality is called Yin Jing. Yang Jing is a more immediately accessible energy, drawn through the adrenals. On top of both kidneys, small hat-like globular glands provide energy for endurance, sexuality, creativity and adventure, as well as stress management ~ they allow us to pull these energies from our reserves when in demand. They also act as the guard-gate, protecting the kidney essence. Adrenal function regulates the androgen hormones, epinephrine, adrenaline and cortisol.

The adrenals produce a stress response called the fight or flight mechanism. We developed this capacity during our hunted-gatherer times, as a mechanism to produce quick

bursts of energy for escaping danger or chasing during a hunt. This branch of the nervous system is referred to as the “sympathetic” response. Adrenal response provides focused energy and rapid breathing, muscle rigidity and tensile strength. The eye retinas narrow to tubular vision during the fight or flight response, focusing for precision during battle or chase.

Hans Selye, the famed Swedish doctor who coined the term “stress”, stated the human body is capable of responding to acute stresses, but will wear down under *constant* stress. The Chinese say the following deplete Jing: over-stress, poor sleep, over-work, poor diet, unhappiness, excess sexual activity, heavy menstrual bleeding, dehydration and excess physical exertion with sweating. If the adrenals become fatigued, producing, secreting and regulating sympathetic response hormones may be compromised. When adrenal taxation occurs from long-term stress, the body may begin dipping into the deeper Jing energy held in the kidneys, then we are tapping into our reserves, and our vitality may wane. Fatigue can turn into exhaustion. If we drain our Jing, we age; we lose our adventure.

Jing is an energy that could be accumulated over four generations: it is an epigenetic inheritance. We can view the deeper levels of health in living organisms by evaluating its direct ancestors. This is also seen in plants. Without this genetic “buffer zone,” an organism’s overall health and resiliency could suffer from temporary changes in lifestyle and environment. If we didn’t have this backup genetic

lineage, our current surroundings and lifestyle would have already been fatal for our civilization. Our *pre-natal Jing* has sustained us, and supports those who eat devitalized foods and live unhealthy lifestyles. One problem we face is that our genetic vitality can create a mask whereby we don't feel the need to take care of ourselves. Then one day, we have digressed into chronic sickness ~ our Jing is gone ~ and we are disempowered to create a new life or health.

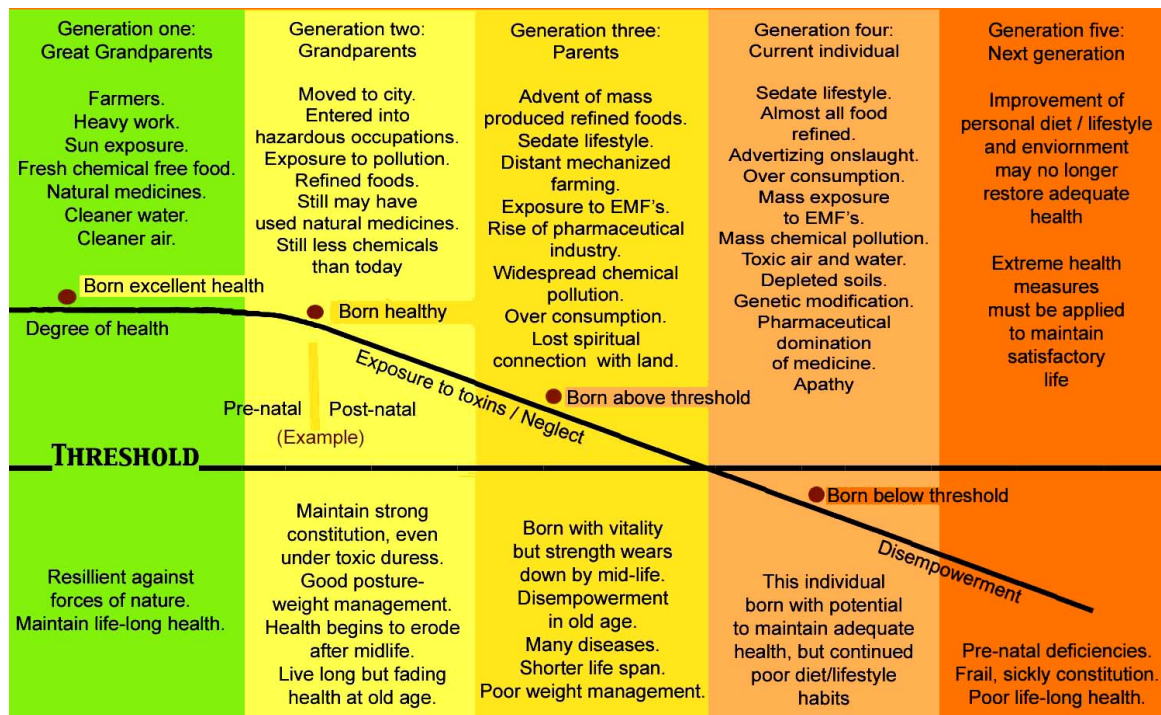
Now, we are witnessing fourth generation junk food eaters. We are seeing a population with depleted Jing; dull children with no interest in adventure or creativity, people unable to recover from illness, and a general lack of spark.

Epigenetic studies may have begun with Dr. Francis Pottenger's study of nutrition on cats. After three generations of poor quality food, the cats suffered reproductive harm and serious birthing difficulties, with offspring showing genetic damage and anti-societal behavior. By the fourth generation, there was no fertility. Dr. Pottenger determined that restoring the natural diet after three generations eventually rejuvenated the animals and their reproductive integrity.

Many young people have the same diets as their parents. Re-establishing healthy pre-natal Jing from deficiencies and neglect by the previous generation may be easy to reverse-- simply a matter of changing to a healthy lifestyle and diet. Adopting a healthy lifestyle should insure Jing will be strong very soon. If the deficiency is traced back to the grandparents, health can still be restored with more effort. If the deficiencies derive from the grandparents, and were

handed down through the subsequent generations, the individual may be seeing chromosomal damage, and needs to engage in extensive recovery practices and specialized diet.

Below is a graph depicting a hypothetical family of four generations, stemming from healthy great grandparents who lived on a farm growing their own food. Their children moved to the city and assumed deficient diets and habits, handing this lifestyle down through two more generations to the present individuals. The threshold represents the point where the lifestyle deficiency can become imprinted on the genome.



Deficiencies may be imbedded over time and generations, but they can still be reversed. This is an important discovery by the ancient Chinese Masters, and is now more important

to observe than ever, as our newest generations have inherited an array of damaging factors, which are related to why there is now so much widespread disease and poor health. Understanding Jing can help us begin to restore health in these deeply damaged individuals, and maintain and preserve our own epigenetic vitality.

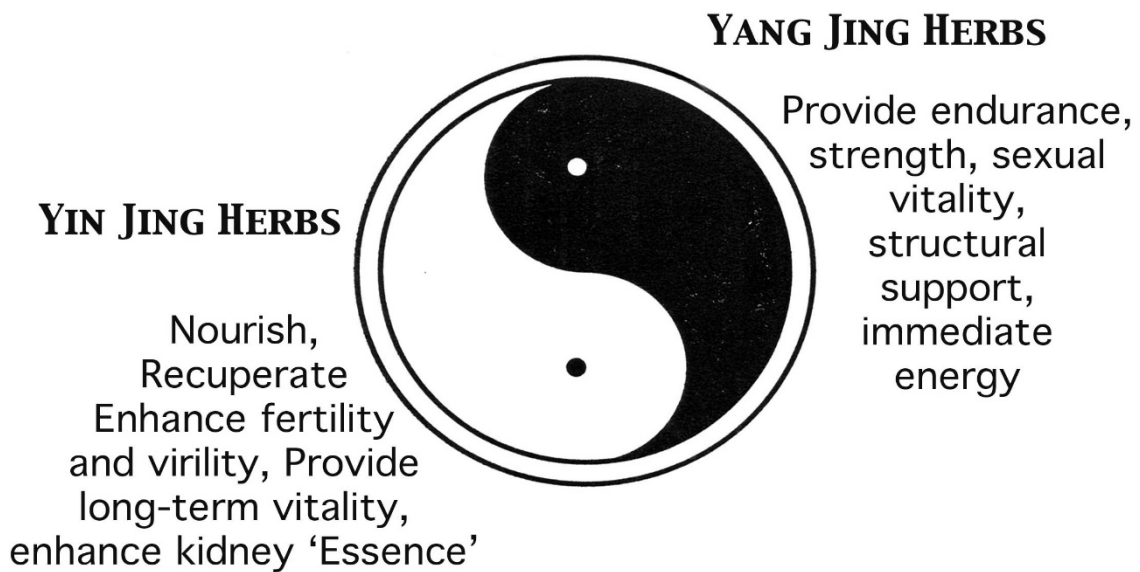
Yin Jing is our wellspring. *Yang Jing* is the drawing of the nourishing vitality. We must refill afterward to replenish and cultivate a vital Jing source. Then adventure, sexual expression, and creativity flow in abundance.

The Chinese Hsien masters found herbs that can restore depleted Jing, possibly even replenishing pre-natal deficiencies. No other health system has addressed these complicated and important aspects of broad-spectrum past and future health, nor found such protective and rejuvenating natural substances to tonify Jing.

Over the centuries, many herbs were classified by the Chinese, as replenishing fortifiers of Jing. This is why they are called anti-aging herbs. There are two classes of Jing herbs; herbs that support Yang Jing, helping the body build up tolerance and endurance for immediate action-reaction to the world around us, and Yin Jing herbs, which replenish and restore the deeper essence of Jing. Yang Jing herbs are quicker acting, helping us when we're under intense acute stresses. The Yin Jing herbs go deep into the body's genetic health. Yin Jing and Yang Jing herbs can help balance and

fortify hormones, benefiting broad-spectrum endocrine function, particularly the reproductive hormones and their interaction. *When the reproductive hormones are balanced and plentiful, our bodies stay youthful.* A balanced and healthy diet with properly selected Tonic herbs taken daily will significantly assist in maintaining this hormone balance. This is why the Tonic herbs, particularly the Jing herbs, are called “longevity herbs.”

Many Jing herbs have “adaptogenic” properties: helping us adapt to daily stresses. When we fortify the adrenals, we feel safer, and this alone can help us begin to replenish our adrenals. We will return to adaptogens in a later chapter.



Yin Jing herbs



Ho Sho Wu (*Lat. Polygonum Multiflorum*). This is the most revered of all longevity herbs. Legend states that around 900 A.D., an elderly man named Mr. Ho was childless; he could not attract a woman with whom he could have a child. Old man Ho was bent over, walked with a cane and his hair had turned grey. He searched for something to restore his youth. One day he passed a plant while hiking, which shimmered at him. He took a portion of the plant to his local shaman-herbalist, who experimented by stewing the tubers with black beans. The legend then states that after old man Ho took the processed tuber, his hair turned black, and he stood up strait, regaining his youth, and fathered 17 children! Thus, the name of the herb is Ho sho wu, which literally means “old black haired Ho.”

One of the top Yin Jing herbs, Ho sho wu can be decocted in hot water and the tea drunk or added into any smoothie or hot drink. Whole slabs of the cut tuber may be found in Chinese herb shops, and high-quality powdered extracts are available. A popular product is called Sho Wu Chi, and can be found at any Chinese herb store and even in many Chinese art shops. This is the product Master Teegarden first took that spawned his interest in discovering the health secrets of Chinese herbs.

Caution; Sho Wu Chi is high in alcohol and may be contraindicated for those with liver damage or high alcohol diets. Ho so wu should always have been prepared in a stew of black beans. If not, it may be toxic to the liver.



Prepared Rehmannia (*Shu Di Huang*) is another famed Yin Jing herb. One of the top Tonic herbs, Rehmannia is called “The kidney’s own food,” and is also a blood building herb, holding a prominent place in many formulas for women’s health,

and helps restore post-natal vitality, after birthing. For centuries, a popular Chinese herb formula for restoring youth is called *Rehmannia 8*, and a simplified formula, *Rehmannia 6*. These are among the most effective anti-ageing herbal formulas ever developed.

Caution; the Chinese Materia Medica lists Rehmannia as a “slippery” herb. Taking large amounts may cause loose stool.



Schizandra (*Wu Wei Tze*) is a deep-purple wild berry. It is a powerful restorer of vitality to all of the five major organ systems; the spleen, kidneys, heart, liver and lungs. This is the only herb in all the Chinese herbology that tonifies all five

organ systems. Therefore, Schizandra is a “harmonizing” herb; its extended use brings the body’s regulatory systems into harmony. It is also known as a beauty herb, taken by Quan Yin, Magu, and the Empress Dowager, to maintain their lustrous and blemish-free skin.

Schizandra is said to “Plug the leaks” of the Jing essence, and to “astringe Jing,” Therefore, it is thought of as a preserver of youth and vitality. Schizandra is said to have all five tastes, and makes a wonderful drink when decocted overnight in water, with a little honey. The Chinese say if you take schizandra for 90 days you will get a perpetual smile on your face.

Contraindications; None



Lycium, or Goji berries (*Go Ji Tze*) is a Yin Jing, anti-aging herb. Taoist herbalist Li Cheng Yuen, who is documented to have lived 252 years, attributed his longevity to taking goji and Ho sho wu daily, attributing Ho sho wu to his first hundred years, and goji to his second!

I once inadvertently planted these two plants in my garden. The Ho sho wu quickly confiscated all the land area, choking the light over a mature rosemary and rose bush, trellising up my amaranth and high into the avocado tree. Nothing could seem to stop this aggressive plant, until it tried to reach into the goji bush. For some reason, the vining tendrils of Ho show wu literally made U shapes away from the goji; it would not encroach on this powerful bush. Both these plants demonstrated their strong Jing reserves.

Goji is high in carotenes, giving it a deep orange-red color. It is excellent for liver health, eyesight, skin, and general Jing vitality. Now popular as a health food snack, Taoist herbalists have used it in tea formulas for thousands of years. Goji makes an excellent ingredient in any tonic herbal tea, any time, regardless of therapeutic intention.

Yang Jing herbs



Cistanche (*Rou cong rong*) is a favorite with Asian athletes, and famous trainers in China have traditionally given herbal teas to their teams, which include Cistanche. Cistanche is

the most revered non-animal Yang Jing herb, noted for enhancing sexual stamina and recuperation. It helps strengthen bone and support androgen and defense hormones. People with busy lifestyles and active sex lives, as well as those who have physically demanding jobs or other activities, may receive assistance by taking this wonderful herb. Good for men and women.

Caution: Cistanche is a stimulant and should not be used at night unless you intend to stay awake. It also enhances libido. May increase sexual desire in young men



Epimedium (*Yin yang huo*) is the infamous “Horny goat weed,” named after goat herders observed their herds going into mating frenzies directly after

foraging the leaves of this plant. Men and women who are sexually active, or who wish to increase their fertility will benefit from long-term consumption of teas including this herb. Great to enhance fertility for couples wishing to start a family. Epimedium is a leafy herb that tastes excellent in tea by itself.

Caution: Epimedium is said to increase libido. It is advised not to take this herb if one does not have a sexual partner.



Morinda (*Ba ji tian*) is the root of the Noni plant. It is a general builder of Yang energy, and excellent in any formula designed to strengthen the body's adaptive energies and endurance potential.



Eleutherococcus (*Siberian ginseng*) is famed in China and Mongolia for enhancing the defensive and adaptive energies. It is considered an “adaptogenic” herb, helping the adrenals maintain balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the nervous system. It builds endurance, sexual energy and bone density.



Eucommia bark (*Du zhong*) is the premier herb for bone, tendon and ligament support. When this bark is broken and stretched, a white ligament-like material can be seen, indicating a “doctrine of signatures,” as Paracelsus named plants whose therapeutic parts resemble human organs. Excellent for those who exert

occupational and athletic stresses on the bones, and for recovery from injuries to the skeletal system. It is a valuable herb for promoting healthy bone density in mid-life (menopausal) women.

Many Yang Jing herbs are derived from animals and insect parts.

Deer antler is known to enhance endurance, growth, sexuality and fertility. The tips of the antler are rich in hormones similar to HGH (Human growth hormone) and steroid hormones. The antler tip holds the largest amount of therapeutic agents. The rest of the antler, called “middles,” is far less valuable, as is deer antler velvet. A high-quality deer antler tips tincture can be found at Dragonherbs.

In China, deer antler is sustainably and humanely harvested from young bucks that voluntarily enter into enclosed areas for protection during the night. At dawn, young bucks are selected who have antler growth at the highest point of hormonal potency, and the horns are gently cut while they are still asleep. Awaking, they run back into the wild forests and begin to grow new antlers. Yet, some deer may not be treated humanely, so I cannot endorse taking deer antler extracts.

Polyrichus ant (a red ant from Changbai Mtn.) is high in zinc ~ an important mineral in the reproductive fluids. It is also high in a free form of ATP (adenosen tri-phosphate), our cellular energy source, and important during times of

physical endurance/stress. The ATP in Polyrichus is immediately useable once ingested. Polyrichus is considered the strongest ant in the ant family, able to lift 200 times its own weight.

When taking Yin and Yang Jing herbs in formulations, one must observe the need for enough rest and sleep, and reasonably pace physical activity. Take deep diaphragmatic breaths, holding the intake breath for five heartbeats. Loosen the shoulders and relax when stressed. Positive thoughts will benefit the adrenals, helping prevent Jing leakage. Avoid substances like caffeine and alcohol, which damage the liver and excite the adrenals to over-work.

Black pigmented foods are said to hold Jing energy, and contain high ratios of antioxidant elements zinc and molybdenum, along with other important minerals and nutrients. Black foods include black beans, black rice, black sesame, black amaranth, black chia, black maca, blackstrap molasses, and Shilajit (ayurvedic). Rehmannia, Cistanche and Ho sho wu are called “black herbs.”

In the formulas below, note the inclusion of Yang herbs in the Yin Jing recipe, and the Yin herbs in the Yang Jing recipe. This refers to the concept discussed earlier where balanced formulas should contain a little of the opposite energy within the larger energy, as represented by the small dots within the larger teardrops of the Yin Yang symbol. When we seek to fortify Yin, we do not create formulas composed of all Yang herbs, for this might push the user too

far in the opposite direction. We balance the tea by adding both Yin and Yang herbs in the appropriate ratios to attain the correct therapeutic response.

Yin Jing Tonic

To restore spent energy, rejuvenate the kidney/adrenal essence. A great tonic for new mothers, those who've been ill or had accidents involving recuperation. An excellent tonic to counteract stress. Good for fertility and sexual potency, and to avoid burnout from excessive sexual activity.

Ho Sho Wu (*Lat. Polygonum Multiflorum*) 2 ounces or one large handful

Prepared Rehmannia (*Shu Di Huang*): 1-2 ounces or one small handful

Lycium (*Go Ji Ze*) 1-2 ounces or one handful

Morinda (*ba ji tian*) 1-2 ounces or one handful.

Jujube date* (*Da Zao*) 1-2 ounces or one handful

Schizandra† (*Wu Wei Ze*) 1/4 ounce or about 30 dried berries

*Tear or cut Jujube dates in half before decocting.

†Add Schizandra berries during last 3 minutes of cook cycle.

Full directions for decoction will be found in Appendix.

Yang Jing Tonic

To invigorate listless energy, strengthen bones, jump-start energy and 'upright *Chi*'. To increase endurance and athletic power. A fertility tonic and sexual potion for both sexes.

Cistanche (*Rou rong rong*). 2 ounces, or 1 handful.

Ho Sho Wu (*Lat. Polygonum multiflorum*): 2 ounces or 1 large handful

Eucommia bark (*Du zhong*) 1 ounce or 1 handful

Epimedium (*Yin yang huo*) 1/2 ounce or 1 handful

Licorice root* (*Gan cao*: 1/2 ounce or 1/2 handful

Schizandra† (*Wu wei ze*) 1/4 ounce or about 30 dried berries

*Note: Licorice should be avoided by those currently on medication for high blood pressure. Jujube date may be substituted. (For detailed discussion on Licorice root, see in Chapter 8, 'Harmonizing *Chi*').

†Add Schizandra last 3 minutes cook cycle

Full directions for decoction are found in Appendix.

Yin and Yang Jing Tonic

To restore and replenish while also increasing endurance and athletic power. A fertility tonic and sexual potion for both sexes.

Ho Sho Wu (*Lat. Polygonum multiflorum*): 2 ounces or 1 large handful.

Rehmannia (*Shu di huang*) 2 ounces or 1 handful

Goji (*lat. Lycium Chinensis*) 2 ounces or 1 handful

Cistanche (*Rou rong rong*). 2 ounces, or 1 handful.

Eucommia bark (*Du zhong*) 1 ounce or 1 handful

Licorice root* (*Gan cao*: ½ ounce or ½ handful

Schizandra† (*Wu wei ze*) ¼ ounce or about 30 dried berries

*Note: Licorice should be avoided by those currently on medication for high blood pressure. Jujube date may be substituted. (For detailed discussion on Licorice root, see in Chapter 8, 'Harmonizing Chi').

†Add Schizandra last 3 minutes cook cycle

Full directions for decoction are found in Appendix.

Chapter Eight

Chi

The second Treasure is *Chi*, an often misunderstood term and difficult to define in western thought. Tracing chi to its origins would include photons, or light, and the activating principle in generating physical mass, and the energy created in the form of biophotons; luminescence generated from living matter. This process of in-taking and out-breathing drives life's rise and return through germination, growth and decay. Chi governs the congealing gasses that led to matter, so, chi existed before there was matter. Taoists refer to this mysterious force as the *Original Chi*, which provides the energy to create universes. The original chi is still present in every photon that passes through our experience, and every cell of life.

Chi adds to, or draws from Jing, and enables the unfoldment of karma and our perception of phenomena as life experiences. Chi provides the continuity we perceive on the physical plane of existence.

Excerpts of The Song of Creation, from the Rig Vedas state of the original chi;

Then was non-existent nor existent: there was no realm or air,
no sky beyond it.

All that existed then was void and formless: by the great power of warmth was born that unit.
Thereafter rose desire in the beginning. Desire, the primal seed and germ of spirit.
Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship with the non-existent.^{xiv}

Chi is the action that makes Jing grow and evolve. The lightbulb is Jing, chi is the force that makes it glow. Returning to Master Teegarden's candle analogy, Jing is the wax of the candle and chi is the flame and the heat given off, and which slowly melts the wax. For nature to thrive and perpetuate, the warm flame of chi ~ the driving force ~ must be consistent yet regulated, and also, we also want the wax of the candle (jing) to be dense and firm, so that the flame is consistent and burns for a long time. If the wax is porous and of poor quality, the candle's life span will be shorter. Or if the flame of chi is too high, even if the candle wax is dense, it will burn down more quickly. If the flame is too low, there is not enough light and heat given off, and the flame runs the risk of being extinguished by the slightest wind, and evolution would not progress consistently.

How energy is *maintained* is paramount to how life progresses and transforms itself into new life. Jing is the governor, chi is the governance. With Jing as the potential, and chi ~ the potentiate, evolution progresses in adaptability and refinement. Chi is what brought us to this moment.

We "gather" chi through the absorption of sunlight, breathing, and from our food. It is essential how these are transformed into life-force within our bodies. Chi is

adsorbed in our bodies, transmuted into energy and released. The maintenance of our capability to convert chi is important to experience our destiny's fullest potential. In Taoist health ideology, chi simply means "your body's daily energy needs." This includes all the energy needed by the body to conduct conscious and unconscious, or autonomic action; including colon peristalsis, arterial and vascular blood circulation, protein synthesis and repair, enzyme secretion and hormone synthesis, circulation, cell building and dead cell removal, recovery from bodily damage, digestion, elimination, respiration, diaphoresis, as well as many bodily functions that work in circadian rhythms.

Chi transforms food into energy. The closest western example of this process is termed "the Krebs cycle", or sometimes called the "citric acid cycle," which maps a complex breakdown process of substrate food elements and transformation into the chemical Adenosine Tri-phosphate, or ATP. Western science believes we draw energy for all movement and body functions from ATP, which is essentially Chi. But, ATP is *merely* a chemical ~ a biological entity ~ whereas Chi is the force that transforms energy into the materials that make ATP, and beyond.

The Chinese believe Chi in the body is governed by the spleen, and with the pancreas, represents the body's stovetop burner, located under the stomach, which is likened to a pot of tea. The duodenum and small intestine represent the body's oven. These organs and glands comprise the Spleen *meridian* (energy center); our inner metabolic factory.

Chi is said to be held in the red blood. In the west, this essence is called hemoglobin: a conglomerate of thousands of proteins and nutrients, and also glucose, the sugars that provide immediate fuel. These are distributed throughout the body via blood circulation.

Men and women have different Chi needs. Men are generally classified as having a “Yang constitution,” meaning that men can run hot and Chi is usually warm and sufficient. Men run the risk of drying up inside without proper hydration and diet. Most Women are said to have a Yin constitution, and can become watery and damp, which can diffuse the Chi fire, leading to weight management issues; weight gain with water retention (edema), heavy blood loss at menstrual period, lethargy, yeast accumulation, and more, which will be discussed in the chapter on women’s health.

Gathering Chi

In human physiology, the first Chi may be gathered with a breath of air. When inhaling, the lungs expand and press down onto the diaphragm. This pushes old devitalized blood out of the liver into the inferior vena cava vein, which is then drawn into the pulmonary valve of the heart and distributed into the lung avoli. With the next breath, the blood is infused with oxygen molecules. The oxygenated red blood is drawn back to the heart and pumped through the aortal valve into the arterial system. Much of this blood enters the splenic artery, heading directly to the spleen.

The spleen contains two blood reservoirs; one of red blood cells and the other containing white blood cells. Here, the white blood cells of the body's immune system destroy (phagocytize) old worn out red blood cells, leaving only vital young red blood to begin a new bodily transit cycle. The blood then traverses through the other arteries of the stomach, pancreas, duodenum and small intestine, where *Nutritive Chi* is infused into the blood.

Nutritive Chi comes from our food, which is first broken down with mastication and saliva in the mouth, then with hydrochloric acid and peptic enzymes in the stomach. Once in a liquid medium, this "chyme" enters the duodenum (first part of the small intestine), where bile neutralizes the stomach acids and many chemical reactions take place to render the nutrients and minerals available to be absorbed into the blood stream, which proceeds as broken-down food "bolus" and passes through the small intestine.

This gives rise to two areas of concern. 1. The food we eat must be high in life force to provide nutrients and elements that support our energy needs. 2. The body must maintain its capability to sufficiently break down the substrate foods and extract the nutrients to build and sustain energy.

What kind of fuel are we getting and how efficiently are we burning it?

Enzymes are transport proteins that serve as activators of Chi. Enzymes are the driving force of the growth of all living organisms, so we should try to ensure we are consuming enzymatically living foods, as in fresh fruits, berries, seeds,

nuts, and vegetables, or the foods need to have been naturally preserved or fermented for freshness. We need food that is unadulterated by excessive and unnecessary processing, a lot of which is done merely to preserve shelf life.

Food needs to be eaten raw or carefully, lightly heated, and we should source foods grown organically in our local regions; cut ripe and consumed fresh, organically grown foods contain denser concentrations of nutrients and minerals. They are also higher in bio-photon-and magnetically derived energy, or life force ~ they have more Chi. The beneficial bacteria used in fermentation provide important factors for our metabolism by digesting various amino acids, starches and fats, and are essential for life to continue. These bacteria colonize in our guts, beginning with the birth passage through our mother's birth canal, and live with us our entire lives, helping as Chi assistants in the digestive tract.

A frozen, packaged, flavored, sugar laden, hormone and preservative-filled food has little life force; the sugars will burn as quick carbs, which causes the body to expend energy, while at the same time providing insufficient nutritional elements, and the false Chi may cause the body to run into energy deficits where glucose may not be sufficiently metabolized. The digestive organs and glands must secrete extra gastric fluids to break down, or 'cleave' away at these substances. This causes enzymes produced in the pancreas to be dedicated to the digestion of this mess, stressing the liver to help metabolize fat and glucose,

allowing fats to build up in unwanted areas and blood sugar to increase. This happens because the body lacks Chi that is properly activated and distributed. The Chinese see this as “Chi stagnation”, like a clogged sink, where the dirty water begins to smell, and things rot.

Stagnant Chi can be at the root of a many health problems, including constipation, difficult menstrual periods with pain and thick dark discharge, endometriosis, bacterial and fungal yeast overload, as well as uterine, vaginal or bladder infections. Headaches and muscle cramps ~ the whole spectrum of pain ~ even cancer, atherosclerosis, colitis are all forms of Chi stagnation. Inflammation is mainly the body’s immune reaction to Chi stagnation. The Chinese believe all the symptoms of ill health we endure, including cancer and atherosclerosis have their roots in stagnant Chi.

The Chinese consider the “spleen meridian (energy center)” to be the stovetop burner of the body’s metabolic process. The spleen meridian includes the spleen, pancreas, stomach, duodenum and small intestine.

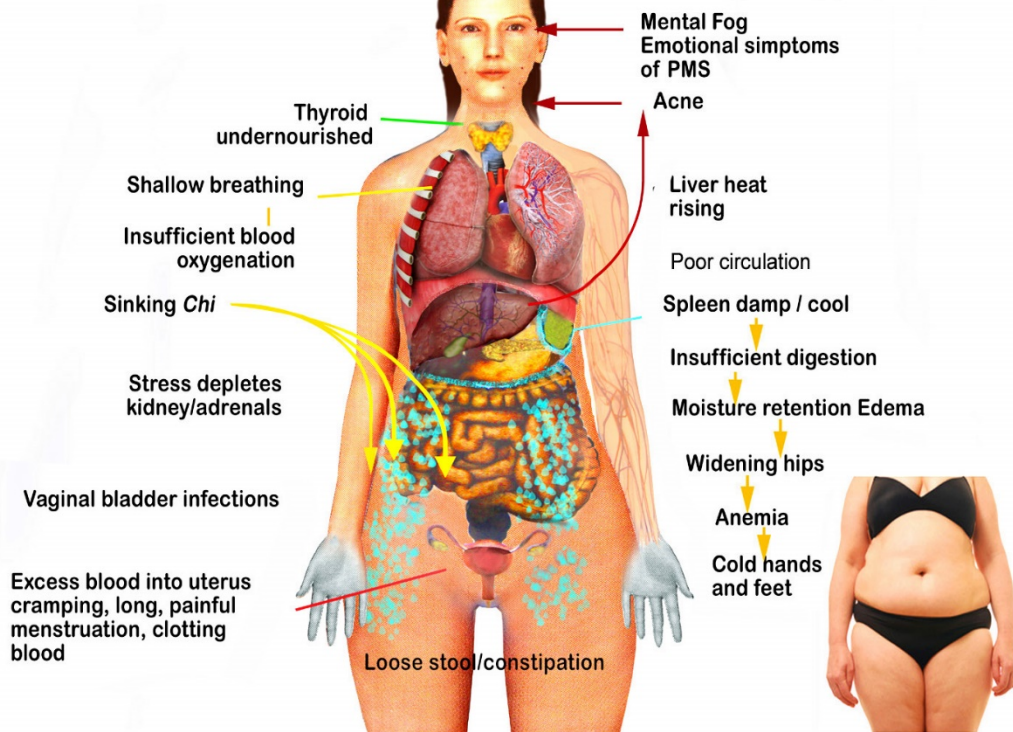
The burner of the Spleen Meridian must be kept dry and warm. The vital energy passing through the spleen meridian must receive its infusion of new iron, oxygen and enzymes, and this production requires heat. Insufficient nutrients will act in the body as cheap oil and gas would in the car ~ less octane burning into less heat. The fire under the belly may burn on low flame. Then, foods will not be broken down as easily or as efficiently, and Chi may stagnate. A person may be attracted to fast burning monosaccharide sugars, as found in sweet snacks and sodas, to attain quick energy. This is

because these simple sugars burn very quickly, but no supplemental energy source is provided, causing a nutrient deficiency. Shortly after eating such foods, there can be an energy crash, perpetuating the need to consume more simple carbs. Soon, the body is running on “false fire” ~ an artificial imitation of Chi energy. The liver transforms extra carbohydrates into glycogen; carb fats that will be stored in the body for future use. If the body does not have sufficient chi in the digestive organs/glands, the fats accumulate. Many foods in a typical North American diet create phlegmatic buildup in the body, and are classified as Yin foods. Extra Yin in the diet can cause fluid retention.

Women can accumulate Edema (water retention), causing a widening of the hips and a bell shape. Men can experience a phlegm accumulation, causing the belly to bloat outward from the front. This fluid retention results in a broad-spectrum deficiency the Chinese call *Damp Spleen*. Fluid retention also causes an environment that promotes the proliferation of yeasts and harmful bacteria and parasites. TCM practitioners believe this malady is prevalent throughout Western society, due to consumption of devitalized, processed, sugary, acidic, phlegm producing and dampening foods.

**Hormone Imbalances:
from diet, environment**

**Insufficient nourishment:
excess dampening (*Yin*) foods in diet**



Yin and *Yang* Constitutions

In general, women are said to have *Yin* constitutions. A *Yin* constitution-type is conducive to holding water as edema and bloating, particularly around the abdomen, hips and ankles. This accumulated dampness can hinder the metabolic integrity of the spleen meridian. Foods that are considered *Yin*; cooling and dampening should be avoided until the edema is reduced. Many raw vegetables and fruits, sugary foods, dairy, glutinous bread and all cold drinks should be avoided, especially during winter months. Some of these foods are essential for health and can be gently warmed before eating. A raw vegetable and fruit diet is

more efficiently metabolized during the hotter summer months.

Men with damp spleen conditions will have a distended belly. This damp phlegmatic environment is also a haven for parasites. Avoid sweet drinks and food, candy, gum and beer. They can eat salads, and should take time to chew well. Men also need to do a parasite cleansing every spring and fall.

Dampness may render the splenic organs and glands unable to efficiently utilize iron obtained from the diet, resulting in anemia. Red blood deficiency creates a cascade of other problems; weakened Chi to the extremities and viscera. Insufficient iron in the red blood lessens its capacity to hold hemoglobin ~ our cellular food ~ and insufficient delivery of these nutrients may be experienced in the extremities, such as cold hands and feet, general lethargy and withdrawn mood.

A woman in this state can benefit from morning Yoga, running or Tai Chi, to get some energy moving in her body. These activities oxygenate the blood, which provides the initial Chi infusion into her body.

Another aspect of blood fortification is iron assimilation, which is a critically important function of the spleen meridian. With a warm spleen, iron is infused into red blood and then we have true and lasting energy. Warm digestive fire and deep breathing with disciplines such as Yoga, will be rewarded with vibrant energy and weight management, a fine disposition and sleek toned body.

Low blood and moisture retention may also cause menstrual anomalies. If blood levels are low and Chi is being cooled by moisture retention, the blood may not be as efficient in “Upright Chi,” where the blood is circulating to the extremities and upward to the head. This condition can allow the blood to “trickle down” during the month, especially during the ovular phase of the moon cycle (approx. first 14 days) where the blood can settle downward and overflow the uterine cavity, possibly causing painful menstruation with cramping. Then excess blood loss can occur during the menses. Due to insufficient Chi causing iron deficiency, menstrual blood may be darker and thicker. Periods longer than two or three days, and with pain and excessive blood flow, are the result of weak Chi, and are a primary example of Chi stagnation. Such irregularities can then preclude a chronic cycle of anemia.

Chi deficiency as anemia can affect fertility. The onset of the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle, initiated at ovulation, requires a warm interior and vital Chi flow. At ovulation, the eggs rupture from the ovaries and move to the upper ends of the fallopian tubes. This process requires warm Chi energy. The body should warm approximately one degree during ovulation, which assists the release of the egg(s) from the ovaries, triggering elevated progesterone synthesis, which also aids in warming the body. This extra degree of warmth helps the sperm migrate upward to the waiting eggs, and insemination can occur, and can also explain why women suddenly feel more excited to go out dancing when ovulating; the fertility dance is in session. If the body does

not have the impetus to increase the temperature, ovulation may not be sufficiently warm, inhibiting the possibility of impregnation. Again, Chi energy is essential in female fertility. Even when a woman does not want to be pregnant, a warm ovulation is necessary for the health of her reproductive system. Chi energy helps maintain efficiency and regularity of the menstrual cycles, assisting healthy blood flow and hormonal activity.

Tonifying the spleen will help remove the stagnating element- dampness. When we “Warm the middle jiao,” or essentially turn up the heat under the cooker, we render nutritive moisture into fuel, helping the body sustain an internal environment that is conducive to long-term health maintenance, and we are not looking for quick fixes. With warm Chi, women can regain a nice shapely figure, and maintain sufficient blood and digestion/assimilation of the foods we eat.

This underscores the need to consume a variety of foods high in life-energy. Chinese herbal tonics can help increase Chi by warming the middle *jiao*, tonifying the spleen, building blood and “transforming” unwanted moisture. Formulas can enhance the peripheral flow of Chi, helping the body attain, manufacture and utilize energy. This in return protects Jing.

A class of spleen Chi herbs have been documented and used successfully and safely over centuries. This herbal knowledge is very beneficial, especially in our age of devitalized foods. The Chi herbs include~



White Atractylodes (*Bai Zhu*).

This herb is essential in any formula to help tonify a myriad of health issues. White atractylodes is good for warming the middle jiao,

turning up the heat in the spleen meridian, and helping remove dampness. White atractylodes tonifies the spleen, thereby assisting the immune-supporting capacity of the white blood cells.



Poria (*Fu Ling*) is also used in formulas with White Atractylodes. Poria is known in China for helping women

maintain a youthful, shapely figure. It is said to help the body “transform damp.” One will almost always find these two herbs in communion in herbal formulas for helping enhance spleen Chi. It is found in tubular sections, cubes, flat slabs of chips. All shapes are the same herb.



Dang gui (Lat. *Angelica Sinensis*).

Dang gui is heralded in China a blood-building herb, and new

research is being accumulated from studies of this herb to determine exactly how it helps to build blood. In China, it is a tradition for women to have meals of steamed spinach with Dang gui during the first 15 days of the moon cycle, and this reportedly helps them maintain sufficient blood levels throughout the month. Dang gui is also indicated in studies in China, Japan and Australia for helping with menstrual cramping and dysmenorrhea.

It is surmised that Dang gui aids the body in attaining bio-available iron. The human body has difficulty assimilating *ferric* iron from plants, but can utilize iron that has been rendered into a state called *ferrous* iron- or “heme” iron. Authors Crawford and Marsh, and Leonard Schlain propose that Humans of Paleolithic times could probably assimilate ferric plant-based iron into the blood, but came to rely on cooked animal meat for iron. This is because animals that eat green grasses, leaves and weeds have digestive enzymes, acids, and longer transit time through the digestive tracts that render the plant-based, or *ferric* iron, into *ferrous* heme iron, which can be more readily absorbed into human red blood cells. Here we have a conundrum. Many people prefer to not eat meat, not trusting that it is antibiotic and hormone free, and that its fats are healthy and lean, and we cannot be assured the animal was raised and slaughtered humanely. Many people also abstain from eating meat from spiritual, humane and religious concerns as well. As vegans and vegetarians, we run the risk of insufficient bio-available iron in our blood. Men don't have much problem maintaining sufficient red blood levels,

because they don't lose it every month, but men's blood needs to be cleansed more often, or excess iron may actually rust in the bloodstream.

Women in particular who are vegan, run the risk of becoming anemic, and this is where the studies linking Dang gui to higher blood levels are very significant; Dang gui somehow aids our digestive process ~ the Chi mechanisms, in breaking down and transforming ferric iron to heme iron. It has not been determined exactly how Dang gui helps Humans "build blood," but theories include that it assists a carrier protein called apoferritin transfer iron to the bone marrow, where new red blood is created.

A traditional meal of steamed spinach and Dang gui has been helpful for women maintaining adequate blood levels. Chinese women traditionally steam spinach with Dang gui at the beginning of each new menstrual cycle, and this has historically been noted in helping women maintain sufficient red blood. But, due to inconclusiveness in studies, I cannot advocate that the use of Dang gui alone will alleviate anemia. Dang gui appears to be most effective when included in herbal formulas for women to tonify the spleen meridian and nourish the kidneys. I provide a tea formula in pages ahead, and another in the glossary.



Codonopsis (*Dang Shen*), is sometimes called "poor man's ginseng," or "ginseng for women."

During the Tang Dynasty, Codonopsis was substituted for ginseng, which had become rare during that time, due to over-harvesting. Formulas for the common people included Codonopsis, and the only available ginseng went to the Imperial Family. It was soon determined that the common people benefited more from the formulas containing Codonopsis than the elite did from the ginseng version, and Codonopsis retained its place in the common formula for tonifying spleen. This classic Chinese herbal formula is called “Ginseng and Astragalus” formula.



Jujube date (*Hong Zao*) is an important herb for nourishing spleen Chi. It is slightly warming to the digestive organs. Jujube date is also called a “harmonizing” herb. It is used in many formulas, and is said to bring the other herbs in the formula into harmony in the body. I use it in all formulas for tonifying Chi. The only other harmonizing herb in Chinese herbology is Licorice root.



Cinnamon Twig (*Gui Zhi*) is a “thermogenic” herb; helping warm the interior. It also has mild anti-parasitic actions. It is

helpful in formulas taken during winter months.



Citrus Peel (*Chen Pi*), is another thermogenic herb, helping break up chi stagnation and warm the interior. It also has anti-microbial properties.

A Chi Tea decoction formula:

Chinese Ginseng (*Panax*) or **Codonopsis** (*Dang Shen*) 1-2 ounces or 1 handful

White Atractylodes (*Bai Zhu*) 1-2 ounces or one handful

Poria (*Fu Ling*) 1-2 ounces or one handful (6-8 pieces if tubular)

Codonopsis (*Dang shen*) 1 ounce or 1 handful

Jujube Date (*Da Zao*) 1-2 ounces or 1 handful

Cinnamon Twig (*Gui Zhi*) 1 ounce or a small handful

Citrus peel (*Chen pi*) 1 ounce or a small handful

To help build blood, add **Dang Gui** (*angelica sinensis*) ½ handful or 1 ounce

For full cooking/decocting instructions, see Appendix.

Chapter Six

Shen: The Light

The Third Treasure, *Shen*, literally means “spirit.” It is an energy of transformation that unfolds when the other two treasures are cultivated harmoniously and maintained in balance. If our body, the vessel of Jing, domain of the genome and vehicle for progression into new lives, has been adequately nourished and fortified by the original force of Chi, then the template is ripe to receive enlightening through the soul.

Completing the three energies symbolized by the candle analogy, Jing is the candle itself and the density of its wax, Chi is the flame of heat, and Shen, is the light given off. Shen is *The Light* of our inspiration and our karma. Karma is the universal law which expresses that our acts and intentions will come back to us. The Buddhist concept of Nirvana represents a place where we find liberation from the polarities of duality (yin and yang) that push and pull us into action. If we respond to that action with calmness and compassion, or with anger and violence, the karmic results will be accordingly compensatory. When we are not easily swayed by the energies around us ~ better or worse ~ we are in the Tao. Cultivating the Three Treasures can greatly help us maintain that stalwart equipoise, and pave the way for

more rapid evolvement toward Nirvana; the enfoldment back into *The All*.

With Shen in our lives, we gain clarity of The Light ~ showing the way to the true source; we may move more quickly toward the enlightenment. Shen is the picture of enlightenment, and Shen is all compassion, tolerance and arcane mystical realization. Shen is the way of Jesus Christ and the true path to enlightenment or heaven. As Shen opens in our lives, we increase our capacity to respond compassionately and calmly to whatever stimuli may occur around us, and encounter adversity with strength and empowerment.

If a person is pursuing health merely for the sake of the body alone, and is ambivalent about holistic spiritual living, that person will deny themselves the complete unfoldment of radiant health.

The Taoist Hsien immortals revered old age and longevity because a long life gave them more time to gain wisdom. In ancient scroll paintings, the old Hsien immortals are depicted as gnarled, rough-hewn characters, in seated meditation in the forest. Sometimes they are depicted holding reishi mushrooms or an ornate tea cooking vessel. A young boy or girl often sits by their side, diligently attending a cooking teapot; a depiction of the continuing oral master-apprentice teachings in the Gate of Life lineage.

Folk tales claim the masters cultivate wisdom over long lives to become immortals, combined with taking herbal elixirs. Elders are still appreciated and respected in China today.

According to Taoist ideology, we may attain an ageless state like that of the Hsien, becoming energy beings, and traveling through wormholes of time and space ~ to other dimensions and back. The Chinese believe immortals are still spotted today, flying in the forests of the sacred mountains of China.

The Taoist adepts say this is possible when one truly attains perfection, and they state unequivocally that this level of matter transitioning will not be achieved without accessing spiritual perimeters ~ Shen. This makes sense if we understand life as frequency densities. With Shen, our energy is lighter, and we can gain clarity to understand the Tao.

This emphasis on Shen, along with Confucius's precepts on civility, honor and humane actions, has had a profound impact on Chinese thought and society from its early stages. Shen peacefulness pervades the aura of many Chinese people; you will notice this once you know how to recognize it. This quality aids in their success with business and personal matters as well. The prevalence of Shen can greatly aid in the creation and sustenance of a long-lived society, which sheds light on how Chinese culture has existed intact for over 5000 years.

If Jing is nourished by Chi, and this integrity is preserved from corruption or usurpation, Shen will bring us to benevolence. Kindness will flow from us to others, and we will attract more fortunate experiences and developments in our lives. Through opening Shen, we can, be of service to humanity, and walk in the Tao. We become *The Light*, and

radiate our benevolence onto others - to inspire them while our lives get fuller.

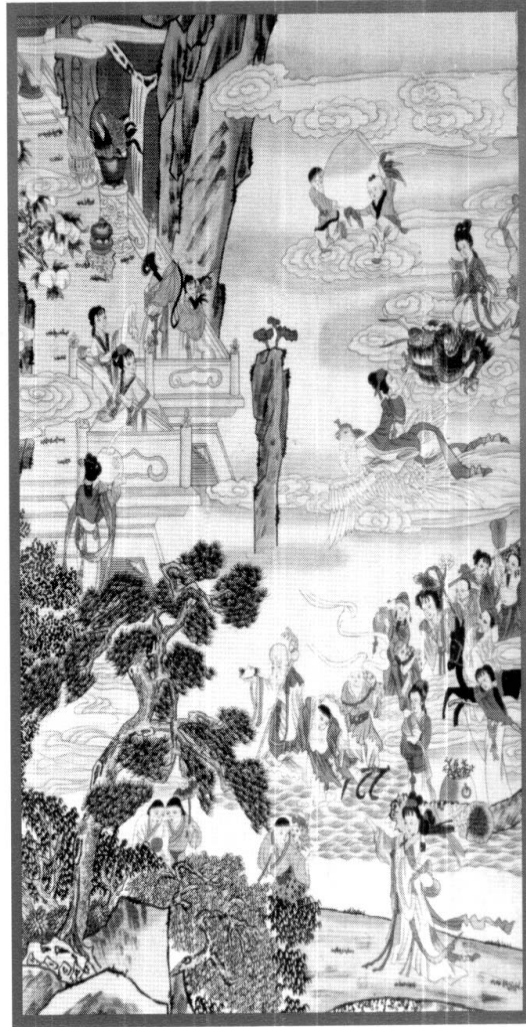
Throughout China's long history and its earlier "wild history" discussed extensively in folklore, the ruling Monarchies took the revered Tonic herbs. They sought longevity and empowerment to rule wisely and effectively. Fangshi doctors gave their rulers herbs to open Shen. This helps explain why China experienced such a sophisticated society from earliest record, and was not invasive, only building armies to discourage barbarians from the north and west. Some Emperors made massive armies of clay statues constructed to scare away invaders, and built a huge wall to keep them out. The society of Northeastern China was highly advanced from ancient times. Cities had Venice-like canals and bridges from 800 BP, where silk robed citizens floated in gondolas. Robert Temple's book 'The Genius of China,' reveals the many inventions the Chinese are credited with during this time.

The Arts were encouraged and incentivized by the Imperial Family by decree of reward... anyone who created a good work was given recognition and prestige, which fueled creative expression of poetry, painting and more.

These traditions contributed to the greatness of Imperial China, and it is considered to have been expedited with the use of herbal elixirs by the monarchy ~ opening their Shen. The ancient Hsien Masters practiced the cultivation of spiritual health as a primary component of a complete health-preservation discipline. Even the modern TCM system includes a category of herbs that tonify Shen.

Legend states that when the first Imperial Palace was being constructed during the Han Dynasty, a wood beam was cut and placed across the ceiling in the Emperors sleeping quarters, from which a mushroom grew. This was taken as an auspicious sign, and the Imperial doctors and Fangshi realized that they should make tea of this mushroom for the Emperor. This mushroom is today called **Reishi**, or **Ling Zhi**. (*Ganoderma Lucidum*).

Reishi became revered to the point that it was almost considered god-like. Reishi mushroom caps were depicted in scroll paintings. In one scene, a reishi mushroom sits on a high rock escarpment, with the sky above and Earth far below, representing “A bridge between earth and Heaven.”



In the lower portions of this drawing, are several mendicants of Taoism working toward enlightenment. They are studying, conversing and making tea. They live with nature (on lower left), and in civilization on lower right. They are guided by the icons Quan Yin and Lao Tzu, who help insure they will not be led astray on their road to reach the Tao. The reishi mushroom grows out of the rock in the center, as their bridge to the higher realms, where masters enjoy a pleasant life in temples and government institutions, and also fly on dragons as celestial immortals ~ “Tien Hsien.”



Reishi is known as “the mushroom of spiritual immortality”, and it was said to “initiate benevolent cycles of health” in the person who drinks tea made with it.

Reishi is not mind altering (psychotropic), but it does have a stimulative effect on consciousness, bringing clarity and activating a connection with one’s higher potential. Reishi can show us the way to our abundance. It enhances our perception of our place in the Tao; our true potential begins to unveil. When we have reishi in our lives, with pure foods, a clean inner body and a healthy mentality, we can attain enlightenment.

It is a great blessing when Reishi comes into your life. This could be a sign that you are ready to enter a new phase in your life, a time of greater abundance.

I don’t wish to imply that by taking Reishi, adversity in your life is going to suddenly disappear, and that you will become trouble-free and happy, or that money will fall from the heavens. Diligence in personal, physical and psychic clearing will still be required. Reishi can illuminate your

way, but karma must still play its part in your liberation from duality. You may have old imprints of hurts or misdeeds, even carried from prior lives, that have to be dealt with, but I feel that reishi is a medium of “fast-tracking” our spiritual relinquishing of those limiting imprints.

Spiritualists believe that we come to Earth to experience an accelerated intensity of duality; the Yin and Yang are more acutely polarized here, allowing us to experience a spectrum of mood variables as we respond to life. The high emotionalism we experience can result in rash actions that can affect our karma, for better or worse. It is said we can relieve great karmic burdens through simple acts of love; conversely, we can fall from grace through materialism, competition and deception. Reishi mushroom is truly a cosmic messenger to help us manifest the higher karmic energy, whereby we could relieve negative past acts very rapidly. This is why reishi is called the “herb of spiritual immortality,” and why it is said to initiate “benevolent cycles of health.”

Reishi was removed from the Chinese herbal materia medica by the Communist regime when it modernized their medical system to focus on medicinal applications, and removed material that could be considered superstitious. Master Teegarden has been working with the official editors of the Chinese materia medica to restore reishi in the category on Shen herbs.

Reishi and other tree fungals are in a special class called Polypores, so named for their smooth porous surfaces on the bottom. This distinguishes them from the gilled mushrooms

that grow from the ground. Reishi is in a class of tree mushrooms called Ganoderma. Reishi ~ *Ganoderma Lucidum* simply means in Latin “shiny mushroom.” Coriolus, Philenius Lentas, Ganoderma Oregonese, Chaga and other polypores in this class of advanced fungals may enhance spiritual clarity as well. Only reishi has been empirically observed and documented for enhancing spiritual awareness.

Reishi is beneficial for the developing fetus and the general immunity of both mother and baby. It can be taken by the mother pre and postnatal. Master Teegarden called them “Reishi babies,” which includes all his children. Reishi babies are usually calm and balanced, and experience little of the skin inflammation so prominent in babies today. They will have a stronger immune system as they grow older.

Reishi is a powerful immune-supporting herb. It is well known its immune-modulating properties, helping balance the immune response; reducing inflammation from auto-immune response, and strengthening natural defenses. It is high in a class of polysaccharides called Beta 1-3-6 glucans, which fortifies the white blood cells. It is a liver tonic and indirectly benefits the adrenals by inducing a sense of personal empowerment, which reduces fear-based impacts on the adrenals. When the adrenals are restored, we feel safer. This will affect our aura of confidence and empower Shen to manifest in our lives.

Reishi grows all over the world, wherever the conditions allow it. Usually found on dead wood in deciduous forests across the Eastern and Northwestern U.S., but has been seen

around Sedona, and in Southern California. It can be found growing from mid-city tree trunks.

Mycelinated plugs of reishi may be purchased from Fungi Perfecti and other sources. Drill ¼" holes in oak or hemlock logs. Bury them just under the dirt and place a floorless camping tent overhead. Mist the tent interior and keep the entrance closed. Reishi caps may appear after the logs have myceliated.

In an enlightened society, special growing rooms for culinary and medicinal mushrooms could be installed near every kitchen.

It is surprisingly easy to include reishi in many of our common drinks, including coffee and tea. Reishi is a bitter herb and blends well into coffee, or can be made into a hot coffee-like brew with reishi alone. Reishi can also be added into smoothies, baked into muffins or cakes (use non-wheat ingredients) and added to oatmeal or soups.

Other Shen herbs include:



Asparagus root (*Tian Men Dong*). The Taoist Masters were said to have attained such purity that they could fly. Asparagus root is said to help liberate heavy earthbound energies, thus lightening our spirit. This is the real essence of Asparagus's fame in assisting and liberating Shen. Taking asparagus root, we can

liberate our spirits to higher frequencies, and may have dreams of flying. When such dreams occur, it may indicate that we are sloughing off some Earth-bound energies, such as desires and materialistic aspirations, symbolically indicating that we are letting go of old karmic baggage that kept us bound to lower frequencies.

Asparagus is also a nourishing Yin tonic, assisting heart fire and dryness in the lungs. It increases saliva, assisting metabolism, and supports kidney Yin. Asparagus root is often used with its sister **Ophiopogon** (*Mai Men Dong*) to nourish Yin and prevent drying. This combination benefits the skin, helping it remain supple and flexible.

Caution: Asparagus root should be avoided by individuals who have damp spleen with edema, as it can increase fluids in the body.



Spirit Poria (*Fu Shen*), is a fantastic Shen herb. I believe Spirit Poria represents the true essence of Taoist philosophy, for it is said at once to liberate the spirit of “Psychic baggage” and other undesirable energy imprints while helping keep the mendicant remain firmly grounded. We want our spirit to fly freely, but in reality, we are on this earth to learn and to live harmoniously within its cycles and dualist energies, not to run away with escapist intentions.

Spirit Poria is similar to Poria (*Fu Ling*), used in formulas to metabolize excess dampness (edema) in the body, and to tonify the spleen meridian. Spirit Poria looks like a slab of chalk-like white material, with a piece of tree root in the center. This piece of root is said to give spirit poria its Shen-enhancing properties.



Albizzia Flower (*He Huan Hua*) is the pinkish fan-like flower of the Mimosa tree. It is said to help one overcome heartbreak, anxiety and stress, and is used in Shen formulas to calm the heart. Three parts of the Albizzia tree are used; the dried flower bell with its stamen, which is very bitter when decocted in tea. I prefer to use the hard Albizzia flower, which is actually from the magnolia tree, and misnamed in the past. Regardless, the hard Albizzia flower is said to impart Shen protection, and is very valuable. The bark (*He Huan Pi*) is also used, but is less powerful than the flowers.



Pearl (*Marguerita*). Fresh water oysters are cultivated for culinary markets, and the pearls are

extracted to be rendered into pearl powder. Pearl has been a favorite beauty herb among the women of elite Chinese society. In the past, pearl had to be hand ground for 18 hours to render it around 50% absorbable in the body. Beauty seekers would pay very high prices for it. The Japanese recently discovered a process of hydrolyzing the pearls with the use of an enzyme, which makes it easier to produce and more affordable while offering many remarkable benefits. The resulting pearl powder is nearly 100% water soluble.

The high mucopolysaccharide content in pearl makes it a premier beauty product. This is a collagen-like material, helping the skin cells retain moisture and flexibility, and for skin repair. An excellent beauty tonic when combined with Goji, Schizandra, Ophiopogon and asparagus root.

Pearl contains a large mineral complex in perfect ratios for our health. It can help supplement the day's mineral needs. Pearl's full spectrum mineral and element profile helps "ground" the body. It is balancing when combined in formulas with uplifting herbs like asparagus and Albizzia.

Pearl is very concentrated; a small amount of 1 - 2 grams daily is sufficient for long-term supplementation.



Polygala (*Tenuifolia*, *Yuan Zhi*), a special herb in its own class, is called a "Shen Stabilizer," also called "The will strengthener." Polygala is an indispensable herb when the mendicant needs

spiritual strength to overcome that which no longer serves his/her higher good.

Polygala is a potent herb and a small amount (approx. 10 grams) may be added to a formula to be effective. Too much can cause an excessive release of “spiritual baggage,” at one time and could cause negative dreams or emotions in the first cleansing phase. It should be used with caution, depending on the severity of the psychic and spiritual suppression. Suppressive elements may include attachment of malevolent entities, an unhappy living situation or relationship, or an unsatisfying job or general malaise. One may retain imprints from traumatic events. I have known women who cannot move beyond traumatic experiences that occurred when younger, many times from a dad or male sibling/relative. Imprints from accidents and illnesses can reverberate, causing the proverbial “dark cloud” over our heads, which is actually an imprint on our auric body, and these attachments may hold us back from experiencing love and security. Polygala can be included in formulas when such negative imprints must be released. Combining Polygala with Reishi is particularly effective for perseverance and attainment of this resolve.

Polygala should be used carefully and sparingly, as a little can have a powerful effect of bringing up old karmic imprints.

Chapter Nine

Protection

Protection refers to immunity and resilience. There are two branches of immunity; one is the resistance of the physical

body against foreign contaminants and toxins, the other is the health of the auric/spiritual body.

Environmental toxins are pervasive in our industrialized world. Food, air, water are contaminated and electromagnetic frequencies infiltrate our space. Tonic herbalism includes some highly renowned protection herbs.



Agaricus (*brazilliensis*, or *blazey-murrill*) is a mushroom from the forests near Sao Paulo Brazil. Agaricus *b.* is currently known as the highest known source of beta-glucans, and is an excellent

cancer fighter. Studies in Japan found it has powerful anti-angiogenic effects on tumors.



Astragalus is also a good all-round protector. Its upright Chi properties help insure nutrients are distributed throughout the body, so that immune agents can be supported in getting to the places they're needed.



Cordyceps is another fungal that grows in high mountains. The Tibetan people use it for lung immunity. It is also considered a mild Yang tonic, excellent for athletes. Runners, swimmers and anyone who creates heavy breathing can benefit by cordyceps' lung empowering properties. The Chinese used cordyceps in tea formulas to help overcome the SARS virus. Wild cordyceps is rare and very expensive. Even at these astronomic prices, efficacy may vary greatly. A standardized variety of cultivated cordyceps is now available, and is very reasonably priced, though probably not as therapeutically effective.

Reishi mushroom (*Ling zhi*, lat. *Ganoderma lucidum*) polypore mushroom is an important immune supporting herb. It is also immune *modulating*; it helps fine-tune and regulate the immune system so that it doesn't over respond to carcinogenic stimuli, which, when an excessive immune response occurs, forms the basis of auto immune diseases. Reishi is high in Beta 1-3 glucans. These are a unique group of polysaccarrides that activate the mechanisms that essentially "turn on" white defensive blood cells called Macrophages. When the immunity is low, these defense cells may go dormant, unable to detect and engulf irregular cells in the blood. Reishi, and the other advanced polypore mushrooms, activates these macrophages. Other polypore mushrooms include, maitake, coriolus, phellenius lentaus, chaga and ganoderma *oregonese*.



Scutellaria (*baicallensis*) is an excellent herb to include in immune formulas. Its main medicinal constituent baicalin has broad-spectrum anti-viral properties, which has assisted the Chinese population in averting viruses, plagues and other maladies brought into the ports of Shanghai and Hong Kong by European traders. “Scute” helps cleanse the blood of harmful microbes. It is very safe and is calming to the nervous system.

Immune tea formula for protection

Agaricus (*Blazei Murrill*) 1 ounce or 1 handful

Cordyceps (*Dong Chong Xia Cao*): 1 rounded tablespoon powder

Reishi (*Ling Zhi*). 1-2 ounces or a handful. Grind to pulp best.

Scutellaria (*Lat. Baicalensis; Huang Qun*): 1-2 ounces or 1 handful

Astragalus (*Huang Qi*): 1 ounce or 1 handful

Licorice Root* (*Gan Cao*): ½ ounce or ½ handful

Schizandra† (*Wu Wei Ze*): ¼ ounce or about 30 dried berries

*Note: Licorice should be avoided by those currently on medication for high blood pressure. See 'Harmonizing *Chi*' Chap 8.

†Add Schizandra last 3 minutes cook cycle

For cooking/preparation instructions, see Appendix

Energetic Protection

The protection of our energetic body is very important and almost completely overlooked by conventional healthcare.

There are energetic parasites that can leach onto us when we are depleted through stress, worry, overwork, and if we are unhappy or thinking negative thoughts. We can also be subject to energetic drainage by negative people.

Energetic and spiritual protection is especially important for people who work in healing professions, and serving others; teachers, public assistants, mechanics, attorneys, nurses, police, firefighters, and any profession that involves stress in public service. Excessively needy people can inadvertently drain our healing powers. Healing arts practitioners are especially vulnerable, as clients expect relief for their misfortune and often don't understand the cause of their disempowerment ~ hoping the healer will cleanse their souls, sympathize with them and their dismay.

Healers must not allow the emotional stress of a client to vacuum our energy. We respond from the frontal cortex information center and not our emotional body. If we are dealing with such persons, we can experience a sudden deep aching pain in the lower back; when I feel that pull, I remind myself to "keep it in my head." I take a breath and imagine the response center returning to my frontal cortex. I can respond to them just as compassionately from my information base rather than my emotional body. I have never been drained since I developed this maneuver. If we continue to be drawn emotionally, we might be draining Yin Jing from the kidneys, which can cause extreme exhaustion, possibly causing the healer to need periods of recuperation. This down-time could affect one's livelihood and spiritual wellness.

Opportunistic entities might attach to us from some unhealthy people who may be carrying these psychic and energetic toxins. Native Americans use sage after ceremonies to clear the air of negative energies, and certain members of their communities acted as “contraries” to confound the lower spirit entities. All religions, including Christians, use prayers, mantras and incantations to keep entities away and to invoke spirits of benevolent energy ~ of which there are many around us. We can purify ourselves through diet and herbal elixirs that tonify Jing and spiritual protection to vibrate at higher frequencies that are not accessible by lower energies.

When approached by these people, we should remember that their higher spirits led them to us, and that we may be able to comfort them. The Shen herbs can significantly help these people, and assist the healer in maintaining resilient energy against emotional and physical drainage when doing this kind of work.

Healer’s Tea

The classic Healers Tea blend is composed of **Schizandra**, **Goji**, **Licorice Root**, and



Dendrobium String. Dendrobium String is now rare and expensive in America, and sometimes the lesser potent pods are used by adding twice the amount by weight. In China, practitioners at acupuncture clinics drink a cup of Healers Tea after each session to avoid depleting their healing energies.

Healer's Tea formula is also popular in Asia with newlyweds, as it is assumed sexual fluids will be expended and exchanged. Then called "Honeymooner's Tea," the yin replenishing herbs help restore body fluids. Persons with active sex lives may gain great benefits from regular drinking of Healer's/Honeymooner's tea.

I often include a few other herbs in my Healer's tea. **Ophiopogon** (*Mai men dong*) is a yin replenishing herb, used for dryness in the body and lung heat. Rehmannia, either the prepared or **raw Rehmannia** (*Sheng di Huang*), can be a helpful addition, depending on the person's needs. Prepared Rehmannia is excellent when feeling aged from healing work. Raw Rehmannia is a good addition when someone is too dry from excessive yin release in their healing. Raw Rehmannia is not considered a tonic herb, but is very important in Chinese herbalism to cool heat in the body. Such heat can cause conditions including hot flashes, red face with acne, stress on the heart and excess unconstrained yang energy, as would be seen in a teenage boy who cannot calm down.

Healers can also benefit from the Indian substance called Shilajit ~ a powerful health protector for those who engage in healing (see my book, *Shilajit, The Resin of Life*). Reishi is a

very helpful herb in aiding the mendicant with protective power of the auraic field and the subtle healing energies. Royal jelly and bee pollen can be powerful Yin Jing protectors.

The spiritual body needs protection as well. Herbs that assist spiritual cleansing include Schizandra, Rhodiola, Polygala and Dragon Bone.

A Healer's Tea formula:

Dendrobium (*Shui Hu-Jin Chai*) 2-3 balls or 1 handful pods

Lycium (*Go Ji Ze*) 1-2 ounce or 1 handful

Rehmannia (*Shu di huang*) 1 ounce or half handful

Ophiopogon (*Mai men dong*) 1 ounce or 1 handful

Licorice root (*Gan Cao*) 10 grams or ¼ handful

Schizandra† (*Wu Wei Ze*) 5 grams or about 20 dried berries

†Add Schizandra last 3 minutes cook cycle

Directions: Place Dendrobium, Goji and Licorice in pot with 6 cups water. Bring to boil, reduce heat to simmer and cover. Let cook 1 hour. Add Schizandra last three minutes of cooking. Turn off heat and allow to cool at least ½ hour. Strain and drink tea, two cups daily, or after one has engaged in healing another, or sexual union.

Drink warm 2-3 cups daily

Chapter Ten

Cleansing

Herb formulas for cleansing the liver, lymph and blood can be occasionally used for internal maintenance. Under normal circumstances gut and blood microbes live with us harmoniously, but harmful ones can accumulate if our internal milieu is out of balance. As many of us are well aware, a poor diet can cause the less beneficial microbial organisms and yeasts to proliferate to unhealthy levels. Sugar and refined carbohydrates are in high quantities in most processed foods. These ingredients can cause the body's pH balance to become unhealthily acidic, and this will further promote the accumulation of unwanted organisms. Yeasts in particular can proliferate, causing intercellular acidity and anaerobic activity. Other viruses and small organisms can burrow into tissues, and microbes will infiltrate systemically in the body's humors.

Many women experience bloating and water edema, causing the hips to widen. The internal dampness can be a ripe place for yeast and microbial overload. As mentioned in the chapter on Chi, this unwanted moisture accumulation can adversely affect the body's energy-producing process, via dampening the spleen meridian, but can also contribute to yeast overload, along with other parasitic and viral accumulations.

Men who eat excessive fatty foods, refined carbs and drink beer can experience a buildup of phlegmatic fluids

around the stomach, causing it to distend outward. This weight gain is a sign that the body needs to be cleansed and the excess fluids metabolized. When the liver is dirty, a man may have a red face, and a short fused temper ~ the proverbial “hot head.”

The Chinese believe springtime is the most effective time to cleanse the body. They teach that the liver is the dominant organ in this season. Springtime follows the shorter and colder days of winter, when we bundled up and ate cooked grain porridges, soups of legumes with starchy tubers ~ potatoes and yams, squashes and brassica vegetables we had stored from fall harvest. We may have taken in more “fuel” than the body could use, and the body could not metabolize it all into energy; some of these extra carbohydrates have been transformed by the liver into glycogen fats and stored in the body. These stored fats and starchy foods need to be metabolized for energy and their waste products removed from the body.

By springtime, the tubers, legumes and stored grains from last year’s harvest are gone; there is not much to eat. We can take this opportunity to drink water and fast, and allow our bodies to metabolize the stored fats accumulated during the winter. When finished fasting and all the glycogens metabolized, the first spring edible shoots are appearing. At this time a fresh green juicing regimen is ideal.

In the summer an all-raw diet high in vegetables and fruit is advantageous. Warm season vegetables and fruits are watery and hydrate and cool us, also assisting our bodies

maintain an alkaline-leaning pH balance. This helps avoid inflammation that can endanger the heart during hot months.

In the fall, the colder, dryer air changes our needs. Fall is when root tubers begin to ripen; onions, yams, squashes, persimmon, pumpkin, and our legumes and brassicas. Harvesting and storage of these, begins a higher starch diet that will continue through winter. Weight gain during this time is normal; some extra cellulose is good for the winter, and prepares the body for the spring cleanse of less consumption.

My favorite Chinese herbs for internal cleansing are not in the tonic herbal class, but are found in the secondary regulating class of herbs: *Scutellaria (Baicalensis)*, **Bupleurum**, **White Peony Root**, **Ginger**, **Coptis**, **Uncaria** and **Dandelion**.

For parasitic profusion with dampness, White Atractylodes, Codonopsis, Cinnamon Twig, Citrus Peel and Poria combined in the formula can also help the body transform the excess fluids through metabolism to promote an internal milieu that is less conducive to microbial proliferation.

Temporary Healing Crisis

When initiating a cleansing program, some discomfort can occur during the initial purging. This healing syndrome manifests while the body adjusts to the cleansing herbs or protocol. Varying uncomfortable side effects may be experienced; emotional turmoil, physical symptoms including skin inflammations, unpleasant bowel movements

and symptoms of cold or flu. The degree of the distress reflects how unclean the inner environment is. The heavier the impact, the more removal of proliferative junk organisms and yeasts, and the more intense the process will be, physically and emotionally. The more intense and uncomfortable the symptoms are, the more cleansing was needed.

The Chinese have a saying ~ when we dig a well, the first buckets will come up muddy. It is inevitable when beginning a cleanse that undesirable stuff will be “dredged” from the body’s recesses. This dislodged material continues to circulate in the body’s humors and pass through the digestive/eliminative tract while making its way out. There’s not much we can do but persevere while the body/spirit adjusts to the changes in environment.

When a person maintains a toxic diet, the body will work in the best way it can to derive energy; when someone consumes a bitter tea of herbs with intentions of changing the existing environment, the proliferative microbes begin dying off. The body can initially send signals via the vagus nerve to the brain, desiring cravings for the toxic foods it knows. It may even be that the existing microbes, yeasts and bacteria could be sending these messages, craving the foods it likes; our gut bacteria can be dictating our food cravings, and could explain why so many people crave sugar. The long term goal of detoxing is having strength and conviction not to return to the toxic diet and food choices of the past.

Healing syndromes are usually very brief; the rewards come soon and are well worth the inconvenience.

One day at Dragonherbs, a customer came in who was healthy but smoked cigarettes and wanted to quit. I gave him a formula made by Master Teegarden for cleansing lungs. About three weeks later the man returned and was concerned about a large blister on his bottom lip. I explained that his body had pushed out something that it didn't want in his lungs or blood.

A lung cleansing formula could include; **Platycodon**, Cordyceps, **Magnolia**, Scute, Reishi, **Dragon Bone** or **Oyster Shell**, Bupleurum, Ophiopogon, **Chinese Pear**, **Fritillarie** and **Mint**.

A toxic person could be ill-tempered, and have a red complexion. This happens when the liver is dealing with too much junk in the body. The liver is generating anger as a way of telling us we need to cleanse. A toxic person may also be prone to frequent colds and flu, which are ways the body naturally detoxes. A healthy person will have a calm demeanor and will rarely be susceptible to seasonal illnesses. Gastronomic distress indicates imbalances of micro-flora in the gut, including fungal overgrowths like *Candida albicans*, which can lead to depression and yeast infections. Yeasts can proliferate under the finger and toe nails- an indication to curtail their proliferation. Yeasts thrive on sweet food and acidic internal environment; sugar cravings are another sign of their presence. Red itchy skin inflammations may signal excess fungal microbes in the body. For weight gain issues due to bacterial and fungal imbalances, refer to the chapter on Chi.

The liver is considered the dominant organ meridian in spring. This is a time for green juicing fasts and herbal elixirs for detoxification.



Over centuries, the Chinese discovered and successfully used many herbs for cleansing the body ~ and the spirit. These include;

Bupleurum is the most effective herb for cleansing blood, liver and lymph. Bupleurum “dredges” the liver of toxins. Bupleurum is never used alone, as it merely dislodges harmful blood junk, while other herbs are included with Bupleurum to move the dead material out of the body. These include;



White Peony root “breaks up stagnant Chi”, meaning it helps remove the dislodged material from the body. Chi stagnation is considered the precursor of all

disease. Classic examples of Chi stagnation include all harmful elements accumulated in the body, but also menstrual cramping and muscle aching.



Licorice root assists the detoxing herbs. It is considered a “harmonizing” herb, important in cleansing formulas. It can help one avoid experiencing a temporary

healing crisis.



Dragon bone is the fossilized bones of ancient mastodons. It can be included in formulas with Bulpeurum to calm and ground a person while going

through uncomfortable transitions.

Scutellaria (*bicalensis*) is a powerful broad-spectrum antibiotic herb. It has been used by the Chinese to fend off plagues, which they have done successfully for centuries.



Coptis is a cousin of Goldenseal. It cools inflammation and is

very powerful in destroying harmful microbes in the gut and blood. Use only a very small (2-5 grams) amount or the tea may be too bitter and potent.



Uncaria is cat's claw; a very powerful herb for pulling out harmful agents in the body. Its hook end is said to "hook onto evil elements" and deliver them

to the toilet.

Polygala can be added to cleansing teas, to help instill determination to continue the cleansing process during the initial challenges and period of acclimation to a different lifestyle. This herb can greatly help a person persevere through challenging changes. Use only a small amount (4-7 grams)

NOTE: This tea should not be drunk on an ongoing basis. Drinking 2-3 cups daily for 1-2 weeks as part of a fast including green juices should be sufficient to cleanse. Spring is the best time to cleanse.

Cleansing Herbal Tea

Bupleurum (*chai hu*) 30 grams or 1 handful

Scutellaria (*huang qun*) 30 grams or 1 handful

Coptis (*huang lian*) 3 grams or 3 small pieces

Dragon Bone (*long gu*) (optional) 20 grams or ¼

Cleansing Green Juice

Dark green leafy vegetable juices cleanse the body and increase energy. A daily regimen of green juicing can have astoundingly positive results for energy, cognition, immunity, adaptability and general health. Green juices were given to patients by many doctors including Bernard Jensen, Paul Bragg, Norman Walker and Max Gerson.

Use spinach, parsley, beet greens, dandelion, chard, mustard greens, cilantro, dark green lettuces and carrot top greens. Green apple and carrot can help make the juice sweeter and more palatable. Blue kale should be used very sparingly, as it can adversely affect the thyroid. Women are most prone to hypothyroid conditions⁶.

Try to source local, seasonal, organic, non-GMO plants. Weeds can be added to your green juices, often available in your area. Lambs Quarters, Mallow, Chickweed and Dandelion grow in many places. Flowers including Nasturtium may be included. Note; make sure the weeds you are sourcing are not from sprayed areas and are free from chemical residues like herbicides. Do not use plants growing in polluted ditches or by roadsides.

NOTE: This juice may be consumed on an ongoing basis as a mild and consistent cleansing agent. One 12-ounce glass daily is sufficient.

Cleanse juice

Spinach 1/2 bunch

Parsley 1/2 bunch

Cilantro 1/2 bunch

Beet greens 1/2 bunch

Dandelion 1/4 bunch

Green apple 1

Carrot 1 medium

Apple cider vinegar 1 oz. or 2 tsp.

Ginger 1/2 thumb-size piece

Optional weeds

Lambs quarters 1 handful leaves

Mallow 1 handful leaves

Nasturtium 2 flowers or 1 leaf.

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Chapter Eleven

Adaptability

Endocrinologist Hans Selye, creator of the term *stress*, stated that adaptability is the true measure of our condition in life. To preserve our health, we must be able to respond to stress

triggers with balanced clarity, but we must also relax and feel safe after a stressful episode has passed.

The endocrine system synthesizes hormones that help us respond to stimuli. The adrenals govern the “fight or flight” responses of the central nervous system. This stress-response mechanism is called the *sympathetic* response. Then the calming *parasympathetic* response helps us neutralize the androgenic stress hormones in order to relax again. Many parasympathetic hormones are derived from progesterone.

Our endocrine systems benefit by a healthy interaction of the sympathetic/parasympathetic responses. An acute burst of adrenaline, followed by a relaxing, deep breathing shrug of the shoulders helps stimulate all the glands responsible for stimulus reaction.

Many people are exposed to chronic stress from societal pressures, work and other factors. When the sympathetic response is constantly engaged, the adrenal hormones will be drained. When the adrenals have lost their power, we can't rise to the stress or let it roll off, and we become vulnerable; we feel run down; our body is trying to tell us we must retreat, rest or take a vacation. Conversely, when our defenses are healthy and balanced, we can adapt to the stress with alertness and right action.

The adrenals are above the kidneys, in the area near the line from the first to second *Dantians*, and correspond with the *Solar Plexus*, which the Chinese believe is the entry portal for cosmic life force that illuminates and perpetuates our existence. The Chinese believe the kidneys act as a

repository of this accumulated vital force called Jing (see chap. 4), held there in reserve for future use, or for times of duress or recovery. The adrenals guard Jing reserves and ward off things that can usurp our vitality; the kidneys hold Jing; the adrenals protect from Jing drainage.

Some daily adrenal depletion is inevitable from exercise, physical or mental labor, stress response, sexual activity, and daily endurance. Healthy adrenal energy is paramount if we want to live full lives. When we expend adrenal energy on a given day, we can relax and rejuvenate with a good night's sleep and some pleasure time at home. The adrenals can be depleted from excessive worry, excess sexual activity, fear, anxiety, etc. The adrenals can be rejuvenated quickly with care, but constant adrenaline hormone release can drain our deeper energy, thus, the Chinese say, "It's ok to be fatigued, but not exhausted."

The Chinese say Jing is "leaked" by constant adrenal fatigue. Once the kidney reserve energy is used, we begin to experience chronic exhaustion; our life candle will burn low and may extinguish. We age more rapidly and become fearful of going out to meet the world. Our lives lose their vitality and adventure ~ we become senile and can no longer be receptive to learning new things or taking on the challenges of our dreams ~ life will pass us by.

This is why the Chinese believe Kidney Jing is a treasure that must be cultivated and protected. When Jing is strong, the adrenals will also be capable of taking on other tasks of endurance, and one will be *adaptable*. Surely, Dr. Seyle was

correct when he stated “Adaptability is the measure of our lives.”

Adaptogenic herbs

In the 1940’s, Russian researcher and Doctor Nicoli Lazarov was working for the Russian government, researching substances that could help soldiers survive on the battlefields during cold winters. He and his colleague Dr. Brechmann were studying a group of indigenous people who lived in the mountains of Siberia who were known to adapt to freezing climates there. The inhabitants revealed an herb they called “arctic root,” claiming it helped them greatly.

The researchers returned to Moscow to study its constituents, eventually determining the root was composed of two sets of DNA/RNA, which appeared to regulate the activity of the central nervous system; it supported sympathetic nervous response; the “fight or flight” defensive hormonal functions, while also supporting para-sympathetic hormone regulation of the pleasure senses. Arctic root strengthened the body’s circadian rhythms. Lazarov named the herb **Rhodiola Rosea**, due to its pleasant rose-like smell, and called it an “Adaptogen,” coining that term. He also classified **Eleutherococcus** (*Siberian Ginseng*) in the same study, finding it also imparted adaptive responses.

Since that time, the worldwide search for adaptogens has been intensive. Many of the Chinese tonic herbs have adaptogenic properties. The ancient Chinese stated that tonic

herbs must impart “dual directional” activity, verifying their understanding of herbs’ effects on the human organism and its rhythms. This knowledge pre-dates similar western research by thousands of years.

Herbs with adaptogenic properties are usually derived from plants that have adapted to harsh and extreme environments. The need to survive freezing and scorching temperatures, drought and torrents, caused the plants to develop phytochemicals to thrive in the diversity, and these constituents help us when we consume them.

The adrenals govern and regulate the hormones of the adaptive responses. They secrete cortico-steroids, adrenaline and other stress response hormones. The body’s stress hormones constantly shift between sympathetic and parasympathetic responses ~ a very complicated system of management. As stated before, the adrenals need support when dealing with excessive stress, endurance, sexual activity and recovery. Adaptogenic herbs are Gaia’s gift to help us, and it is a blessing that we have rediscovered them in this stressful age.



Rhodiola (*Rosea*, *Crenulata* or *Sacra*) is the most revered adaptogenic herb. Read above for Rhodiola’s properties. I recommend the *Crenulata* variety, coming from the high eastern Himalayas of China. *Sacra* is

found in Tibet and is considered the best variety, but is rare and expensive. *Rosea* is sourced in Siberia and is good but not thought to be as powerful.



Gynostemma (Jiao Gu Lan) is a vining plant that originated in the southwestern Chinese slopes of the Himalayas. It makes an excellent tea and is said to be the primary longevity herb used by the Hunza people, who are among the longest living people on Earth. Gynostemma contains four polysaccharides (gypenosides) that are identical to ginsenosides in ginseng, making it a good alternative to ginseng, which is now overharvested and endangered. Gynostemma can be substituted for ginseng in any formula.



Eleutherococcus (Siberian Ginseng) is another adaptogen studied by Lazarov's team. It is not in the ginseng family and must be called Eleutherococcus, per the FDA. This root herb is great for athletes and persons who endure physically demanding occupations and conditions.

Adaptogenic herbs are helpful for students who need to stay focused on their studies late into the night, and those with professions that have irregular and late hours. Athletes may experience better mental focus, agility, and endurance from using adaptogenic herbs.

An adaptogenic tea decoction formula

Astragalus (*Huang Qi*): 1 ounce or 1 handful

Rhodiola root (*Chinese; Crenulata*) (*Arctic Root*): 1 ounce or ½ handful

Siberian Ginseng (*Lat; Eleutherococcus Senticosis*): 1-2 ounce or one handful

Lycium (*Go Ji Zi*): 1-2 ounces or 1 handful

Licorice root* (*Can Cao*): ½ ounce or ½ handful

Schizandra† (*Wu Wei Ze*): 1/4 ounce or around 30 dried berries

Gynostemma† (*Jiao Gu Lan*): ¼ ounce or about 1 tablespoon full dried leaves.

*Note: Licorice should be avoided by those currently on medication for high blood pressure. See Licorice in 'Harmonizing *Chi*' Chap 10.

†Schizandra and Gynostemma should be added last 3 minutes of cook cycle

Directions: Follow directions listed in the Appendix.

Chapter Twelve

Meridians, *Dantians* and Channels

Modern TCM practice centers on five distinct organ systems, and their mutual interaction. The organ meridians were first discussed in the Yellow Emperors Classic of Internal Medicine. These five organ systems represent distinct energy centers, and the organs and glands that are indicated in each may confound western medical specialists. The five organ meridians must be understood in relation to Tonic Herbalism to more fully grasp the full scope and energies of the Three Treasures.

The five organ meridians

Spleen meridian

Earth element

Dominant all year

The Spleen meridian is composed of the spleen, pancreas, duodenum, small intestine and stomach. As explained in the Chi chapter, this is the body's energy producing center, where ingested food is hydrolyzed with peptic acids and pancreatic enzymes, and the living energy in foods is extracted and Chi is infused into the blood.

Primary herbs for tonifying the spleen meridian are

White Atractylodes

Codonopsis

Jujube date (red and black)

Poria

Coix

Cinnamon twig

Citrus peel

Cardamom

Liver Meridian

Wood element

Spring

The Liver meridian includes the Liver and the gallbladder. These cleanse the blood and assist the spleen meridian in metabolism. Unmetabolized carbohydrates, including sugars, fats and starches are transformed by the liver into glucose and glycogen fats that are stored in the body for future use. This is one of the main mechanisms of weight gain ~ when people eat more fuel than their body can burn, they will accumulate throughout the body. The liver can become enlarged with Chi stagnation of these fats.

The Gallbladder secretes bile into the duodenum. This alkalinizes foods, neutralizing the acidity of the peptic enzymes and hydrochloric acid used by the stomach to break down the food for easy passage into the intestines. Without bile, our digestive tract would become overly acidic and we would experience gastronomic pain. An alkalinizing daily fresh green juice is very helpful in easing the stress on the gallbladder.

The liver meridian benefits from two classes of herbs: those which cleanse the liver and blood, and those that help break down unused fats for metabolism. This is primarily why fasting can help immensely during liver cleanse protocols.

Herbs that benefit the Liver meridian include

Gynostemma

Scutellaria bicalensis

Bupleurum

Coptis

Dandelion

White Peony and red peony root

Ho Sho Wu

Reishi

Schizandra

Gastrodia

Crataegus (Hawthorne)

The Heart Meridian

Fire Element

Summer

The Heart is the Yin organ of this meridian and the pericardium is its Yang partner. The heart meridian is responsible for maintenance of arterial and vascular blood movement, to and away from the heart. The heart is also affected by emotions. When feeling anxiety, the pericardium is stressed in its protection of the heart, and blood pressure may rise. Herbs that nourish the heart and blood, and calm the spirit, help the heart meridian. High blood pressure is rampant in our society, due to excessive intake of artery clogging foods. Herbs that facilitate a free and easy blood flow through the arteries and veins support the heart meridian.

The Yang component of the heart meridian is the pericardium. This is a lining that is said to protect the heart from excessive expression of the emotions of the other organs. Thus, it is called “Minister of the Heart.” In Hindu scripture, Arjuna would be the heart and Krishna the pericardium.

Herbs for tonifying the Heart Meridian include

Gynostemma

Longan

Albizzia flower (soft and hard versions)

Albizzia bark

Reishi

Ligusticum

Dang gui

Pearl

Rhodiola

Schizandra

The Lung Meridian

Fall

Metal Element

The lungs and large intestine form the Lung Meridian. The lungs infuse oxygen into the red blood as it passes from the pulmonary valve of the heart into the lung Arteries, then the oxygenated blood is pumped through the aortic valve into the body's arterial system for distribution to the head, organs and extremities. Oxygen is vital to red blood mobility, and its passage through the lungs forms the first essential step on the blood's Chi pathway. If blood does not receive a consistent infusion of fresh oxygen, it does not circulate well. The lungs are the Yin organ in this meridian. They are said to control the emotions. This is why Yogis place emphasis on breathing techniques to calm the mind and emotions. The lungs are the only organ that can be controlled autonomically or consciously; they will function without our attention, but can be directed by our thoughts. People living in fear will breathe shallowly and rapidly. This can be helped with conscious deep breathing and related Yogic techniques. The lungs function closely with the adrenals.

The large intestine is said to be the Yang partner of the Lungs. A full breath of air expands the lungs, pressing the diaphragm downward on the liver, digestive organs and intestines. This consistent pressing action is necessary for peristalsis of matter through the large intestine. Partially

digested food enters into the first part of the large intestine, or upper colon, and must travel vertically before reaching the gravity-neutral segment of the transverse colon. This upward movement requires oxygen in the blood to assist peristalsis- the pushing action- to move the food and waste material along.

Herbs for the Lung Meridian include

Cordyceps

Rhodiola

Gingko

Magnolia bud

Mint

Hard albizzia flower

Platycodon

Frittilary

Chinese pear

Licorice root

Kidney Meridian

Winter

Water Element

The kidney meridian is tonified by herbs that support both Yin and Yang Jing. The Tonic herbs are very nourishing for

the kidney meridian, which includes the kidneys and adrenals. When we tonify kidney we are supporting anti-ageing mechanics and energies of our bodies, our genetics and our fortitude.

Winter is the time to increase nourishment of the kidneys. Black foods including black beans, black rice, black sesame, black olives, figs, black amaranth, are all good during this season. Hot teas, soups, porridges, and warming foods are preferred for optimum health in winter. Cool raw summer vegetables and cold drinks are not recommended at this time.

Herbs for tonifying Kidney Yin include

Ho Sho Wu

Rehmannia (prepared only)

Schizandra

Goji (*Lycium chinensis*)

Ligustrum

Cnidium seed

Cornus

Pearl

Reishi

Herbs to tonify Kidney yang will also benefit the adrenals, which produce all the steroid hormones, and are essential for protecting the kidneys from depletion of Jing. They are responsible for our adaptability; thus adaptogenic herbs especially benefit the adrenals. Virtually all of the Tonic herbs in the Chinese pharmacopoeia contain some

adaptogenic properties, but the Yang Jing herbs are the most potent.

Herbs for Kidney Yang include

Eucommia bark and seed

Epimedium

Cistanche

Eleutherococcus

Cordyceps

Rhodiola

Korean ginseng

Polyrichus ant

Deer antler

Male silk moth

NOTE: Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang herbs are never used exclusively to create effects on body energy. Making a formula of all kidney Yang herbs may cause too much vital energy and drying, which could tax the adrenals. Formulas composed exclusively of kidney Yin herbs may increase excessive Yin with moisture retention. When constructing an herbal formula, always remember to observe the balance of Yin and Yang when combining the herbs listed above. It is quite beneficial for all people to include some kidney Yin and Yang herbs in their formulas, depending on their constitution and their needs.

The Three Dantians

The Chinese describe three distinct sections of the body that govern different aspects of life. The commonly used Chinese term “Jiao” translates to *Dantian*.

The **Lower *Dantian*** extends upward from the testes to the ovaries, adrenals and kidneys (discussed in chap. 4), and represents the body’s reproductive and eliminative center. This is the domain of Yin Jing and Yang Jing organs/glands (chap 4).

The **Middle *Dantian*** is the metabolic and blood fortifying center. This is the area of the Spleen Meridian (chap. 5), and the Heart Meridian, where blood, our energetic fuel, is pumped to body extremities through the arterial system.

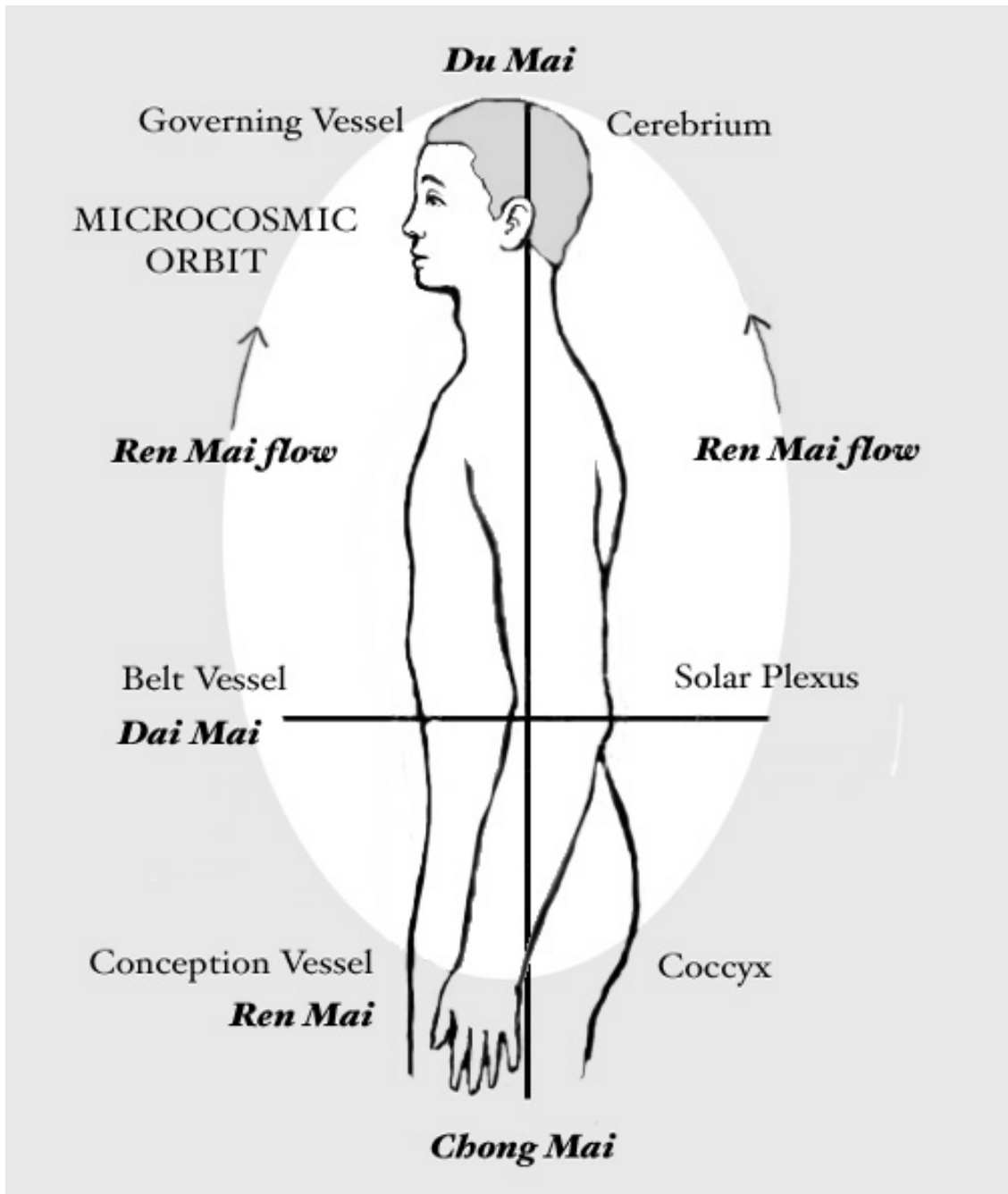
The **Upper *Dantian*** extends from the Lungs to the Crown Chakra (chap 6.), representing the respiratory, olfactory, cognitive and spiritual energies.

The Eight Extraordinary Vessels And the Microcosmic Orbit

Chinese medical texts describe a complex flow of energy through the body, sometimes called “Circulation Sex.” This vertical circular energy flow is called the Microcosmic Orbit and connects the pre-natal and sexual energies with the higher spiritual frequencies. It begins when the developing fetus is in the uterus. The flow of this energy is said to begin at the Conception Vessel, *Ren Mai*, located at the coccyx, and rises up along the back and over the head to the Governing

Vessel, *Du Mai*. The *Ren Mai* also rises along the front of the body to meet the *Du Mai* at the Crown *Chakra*. The Penetrating Vessel, *Chong Mai* flows upward through the spine and correlates with the Chakras. The Belt Vessel, *Dai Mai* circulates at the waist and is associated with the Solar plexus and the Spleen Meridian of Chi production.

These are the most important of the eight vessels, and are observed in Asian martial arts practices. Understanding this energy is valuable in the Gate of Life, as associated with the concept of the Microcosmic Orbit: a circular energy that links our reproductive energies with the mental and spiritual energies. Taoist health philosophy recognizes that the sexual energies of *Jing* can be nourished, preserved and transformed into powerful healing energies and governing empowerment. Men in particular benefit by the cultivation of the microcosmic orbit, by preserving semen. It is said that the semen can be cultivated during sexual activity, but then if not ejaculated, it reverts to cerebral spinal fluid, rising to the *Du Mai* at the Crown Chakra, where this powerful energy can be utilized for the benefit of humankind. This is a primary reason why Taoist and Buddhist adepts maintain semen retention.



The Microcosmic Orbit

Chapter Thirteen

Appendix

Sourcing high quality herbs

Many large cities have a Chinese neighborhood and business district. This is where herb shops can be found. You will encounter varying degrees of quality with the whole herbs. These shops feature colorfully boxed Chinese herbal “Patent formulas” of pills, powders and syrups. Possibly towards the back of the store, you’ll find a shelf or two of packages of whole herbs. Employees may not be accustomed to speaking about herbs with non-Chinese, and you may encounter a sense of indifference. Communication issues can occur depending on language proficiency. Ask if there is an English/Pinyin translation table in a book they may have on hand; I find many herb shops have these books at their herb counters. Look in the glossary for the western name of the herb, then point to its Pinyin or Chinese name. Then they will know what you want, but could bring you the wrong herb, because more than one herb may be given the same name, only with different secondary pharmaceutical names or from different parts of the plant.

For instance, there are two *Albizia* flowers, both named He huan hua. One version is a soft flower from the mimosa tree, and the other is a hard brown flower from the Magnolia tree. Both *Albizia* flowers are said to tonify Shen, but the soft flower is very bitter and difficult to drink. The soft

flower is the true Albizzia flower. The bark of the Albizzia tree is also used and is called He huan pi. You must be knowledgeable to receive the right herb, even after the clerks know Chinese name.

The best way is to take a sample of the herb and hold it, pointing to the organ meridian it is associated with. That might boost your credibility with the staff to take you seriously and find an herbalist there who can assist you. They are not accustomed to non-Asian persons with any knowledge of herbs.

Then you will want to purchase the highest quality examples of the herbs they have to offer. There are a few ways to do this. The best approach is to determine if the shop has different examples of a specified herb. Often times they will, and may vary in price. Buy the highest priced variety they have. The more expensive it is, the more likely it was sourced from the protected forests of Northern Manchurian regions of China. In some reputable herbs shops in larger cities, herbs sourced from Changbai Mountain are still available.

This privilege is now changing, as the Chinese population is acquiring wealth, and more people there have the means to purchase high quality herbs.

The higher quality herbs are surprisingly inexpensive for what they offer when used appropriately. In some larger shops, the same herb may be found in two or three bulk bins, with different prices. For instance, three bins of loose Dang gui may be sold at different prices. The least expensive at \$7.99 per pound, should probably be avoided; probably

grown in disturbed lowlands near cities and industry. The mid-grade roots, at \$13.99, may have been sourced from upland farms away from industry, but possibly grown with inorganic fertilizers or other corrupted materials. The most expensive bin at \$19.99 per pound is most likely sourced from the high pristine uplands and remote regions renowned for producing excellent quality Dang gui. Spend the extra money to get the best.

Look for herbs that have not been bleached or sulfured. These will usually be darker in color and appear more gnarled. Semi-wild Ginseng is best; look for the most mangled, stunted and heavily striated roots. These were subjected to the harshest conditions and will have extra defensive and adaptive phyto-chemistry. The sleek, unblemished ginseng grown on farms is not as valuable for our health.

With Ho sho wu, make sure it was cooked in black bean stew. This will result in the root slices having a dark brown to black color, and look like dark potato chips. The Chinese herbal pharmacopoeia states that Ho sho wu is a safe herb to take regularly and is said to protect the liver. But recent studies link it with hepatitis. This could be stemming from either drinking too much alcohol infusions of Ho Show Wu ~ which is very popular in China ~ and is a major herb in the famed longevity drink Sho Wu Chih. It is sometimes called Fo-ti: an illegitimate name for Ho ho wu.

The root is not therapeutic for the kidney unless it has been simmered in a paste of black beans. Always ask the Chinese herbal pharmacist how their Ho sho wu has been

prepared. If they don't know about this process, don't buy it. A recent study determined that Ho sho wu can potentially cause damage to the liver. The researchers neglected to use the black-bean-processed root in their studies, working with the raw tuber, thus, their findings once again correlate with the ancient Chinese tradition; Ho sho wu is only therapeutic after it has been processed with black beans.

With Astragalus, the interior of the root slice should be yellow in color. Take a sample piece of the root and wet a paper towel. Rub the wet towel vigorously across the yellow area, and if yellow pigment comes off on the towel, it has been dyed yellow, and is a low-quality herb disguised to appear higher quality.

Look for smaller Jujube dates. The bigger puffy ones are not as good. Bigger definitely isn't better with Chinese herbs.

With Longan, look for the golden fruits. Darker means they were baked with higher heat. The golden ones were most likely dehydrated at low-heat or sun dried.

With Cordyceps, the control grown varieties are quite sufficient; the expensive wild Cordyceps produced from mycelination of caterpillars is now too rare and expensive. Those of us who can afford it may enjoy some wild Cordyceps, but I feel the remaining Cordyceps should be used by the people of the high Tibetan plateau; they need this herb for lung Chi more than we do. Also, the collectors of wild Cordyceps are defiling the landscape as they crawl across the frosty ground and dig with small hand shovels to procure the mushrooms. They disturb and displace the

delicate and sparse vegetation, which can contribute to serious erosion.

With Reishi, look for the red caps. Even better are the “antlerized” varieties, where the fruiting body has been harvested before the cap formed, preventing its sporulation. This way, the fruiting body has withheld its Jing ~ its reproductive essence. Antlerized Reishi is very rare and very expensive. Red Reishi is the best one for our needs at this point in human evolution. Red Reishi tonifies the Shen of the heart meridian, assisting our ability to give and receive abundance. Brown dusty reishi caps have sporulated and released their Jing. They are not as valuable for health, but are still therapeutic if that’s all you can find.

I believe reishi spores are not suited for human consumption. The spore is an extremophilic device, designed to survive long distances and vast amounts of time drifting through space. It is not going to be digested while in our bodies. Recent technology cracks the spores by slamming them against a hard surface at extremely high velocity. I believe cracked spores are subject to oxidation and will quickly become useless. Cracked spores are diluted in oil of the spores to preserve them, and this oil is most-likely valuable for health, but still, I feel that the spores are not to be cracked.

Prepared Rehmannia (*Shu Di Huang*) usually comes in black slabs approx. two inches in diameter. It should be tough but flexible, and torn apart with some effort. The unprepared Rehmannia root (*Sheng Di Huang*) will be a lighter dusty brown, with a shriveled surface, and will be

less flexible. The same with Cistanche; the root pieces should look like they were dipped in wet black tar and should be flexible.

Schizandra should be bright deep violet-to-purple. The dried berries will have a complex sour taste and when diluted, will create a beautiful pure pink tint in water. Try splashing some Schizandra water on your face after washing. It makes a refreshing drink on its own. Add 20 Schizandra berries to 16 oz. glass of room temp water, allow to sit overnight. Strain, add a bit of sweetener and refrigerate; can drink all through the day.

These are a few examples. More can be found in my book *Raw Chi* and Ron Teegarden's *The Ancient Wisdom of the Chinese Tonic Herbs*. Reading these books before visiting herb shops may aid you in attaining high-quality herbs.

Herb Alchemy

Chinese herbalism is important because it has developed over many centuries. During this time many experiments were made combining plants to observe their synergistic properties. It was determined that the actions and effects produced by various herb combinations would equal more than the sum of the parts, and would be different than if the herbs were taken individually. This is the quintessence of Chinese herbal formulation, and is also the part that you may spend the rest of your life studying; the macrocosm of herbal alchemy will never cease to unfold new insights as

you gain further understanding, and these precepts may be applied to Western herbology as well.

The ancient alchemists of Changbai Mountain discovered that actions of an herb may be enhanced when combined with other herbs. For instance, white *Atractylodes* and *Poria* are almost always combined to assist warming the spleen meridian as well as removing the dampness that is causing the cooling. Add *Astragalus* to send the Chi “upright,” to the body’s periphery, helping warm the hands and feet, and getting nutrients and Chi to the head and brain. We may use *Jujube* date to “harmonize” the formula and bring all the herbs into balance. Add *Dang gui* to help the body build blood, which enables the full flow of Chi in the blood. For extra warming of the middle jiao, or digestion-intestinal, we may include cinnamon twig and/or citrus peel. Then you have created a sophisticated formula for women’s energy, weight management and blood fortification. The classic formula *Ginseng and Astragalus* supports immunity, Chi and blood.

For an immune formula, combine *Reishi* with the other immune-supporting herbs: *Cordyceps*, *Maitake* and *Agaricus*. Add *Scutellaria* root to help cleanse the blood and reduce inflammation, and *White Peony* root to break up Chi stagnation that is usually present in sickness and disease. If the infection is in the sinuses or lungs, *Magnolia* flower and mint can be added to send the immune regulating properties to the nasal cavity, thereby helping direct the anti-inflammatory and immune regulating properties to a localized area. *Platycodon* and *Fritillary* can be added for

extra lung immune and anti-inflammatory support. If the lungs have excess moisture with clear sputum, adding Ephedra can help (must be done by a licensed TCM doctor), and if the inflammation is dry with irritable cough and yellow sputum, Ophiopogon may be added.

For assisting the Heart Shen, combine Reishi with Longan and Ligusticum, which sends Shen properties to the Heart Chakra. Gynostemma and Salvia Miltohrriza are also helpful in heart health. Pearl and Albizzia can calm disturbances like anxiety, heartbreak and stress. The classic Chinese formula *Ginseng and Longan* helps relieve stress on the Heart Shen, and nourishes the blood. This is a great formula for women who are anemic and are experiencing heartbreak or anxiety.

For cleansing and relieving Chi stagnation in various parts of the body, Bupleurum, White Peony and Scute are effective. Gentiana directs the stagnation-relieving energies to one of the three primary “jiaos”, with the lower jiao, or the genitalia, urinary and reproductive organs. Some classic formulas for cleansing include *Bupleurum and Dragon Bone* formula, for clearing Chi stagnation and liver-blood toxicity, *Poria Five Combination* for relieving dampness in the middle-lower jiao ~ a problem many women experience from fluid retention. *Bupleurum and Rehmannia Combination* utilizes raw Rehmannia, a very effective herb for relieving “rising heat” from the liver or adrenals, which can result in acne and PMS related symptoms, as well as menopausal hot flashes. *Rehmannia Six Combination* uses prepared Rehmannia with

other anti-ageing herbs. This is a renowned rejuvenation formula.

Herbal Formulas

These formulas are designed to be cooked in one gallon of water. See cooking instructions at end of this chapter.

Yang Jing elixir

Epimedium 10 gr

Eucommia bark 20 gr

Cistanche 30 gr

Ho sho wu 30 gr

White peony root 30 gr

Rehmannia 30 gr

Licorice 15 gr

Schizandra* 8 gr

Yin Jing Elixir

Ho sho wu 30 gr

Rehmannia 30 gr

Eucommia bark

Morinda 30 gr

Goji 30 gr

Jujube or licorice 15 gr

Schizandra* 8 gr

Chi Elixir

White atractylodes 30 gr

Poria 20 gr

Codonopsis 20 gr

Jujube 20 gr

Adding herbs for weight loss ~

Citrus peel* 10 gr

Cinnamon* twig 10 gr

Heart Elixir

Longan 30 gr

Albizzia flower (hard) 15 gr

Reishi 15 gr

Polygala 5 gr

Spirit poria 30 gr

Licorice 15 gr

White peony root 20 gr

Schizandra* 7 gr

Pearl (optional) 4 gr

Lung Elixir

Cordyceps 15 gr

Scutellaria root 20 gr

Fritillarie 10 gr

Platycodon 20 gr

Ophiopogon 20 gr

Licorice 15 gr

Mint* 7 gr

Magnolia bud* 10 gr

Brain Elixir

Rhodiola crenulata 8 gr
polygonatum sibericum 30 gr
astragalus 20 gr
goji 20 gr
Lions mane 20 gr
Licorice 15 gr
Reishi 10 gr
Schizandra* 7 gr

Spirit Elixir

Reishi 20 gr
Spirit poria 30 g
Longan 20 gr
Albizzia flower (hard) 15 gr
Asparagus root 15 gr
Licorice or Jujube 15 gr
Schizandra* 7gr
Pearl (optional) 4 gr

Immune Elixir

reishi,
agaricus,
astragalus,
scutellaria,
licorice
white peony root

Woman's Elixir

Dang gui 8 gr
Ho show wu 30 gr
Rehmannia 30 gr
White Atractylodes 30 gr
Poria 20 gr
Jujube 20 gr
Schizandra* 7 gr

Man's Elixir

Eucommia bark 30 gr
Rhodiola (crenulata) 7 gr
Morinda 30 gr
Ho show wu 30 gr
Reishi 15 gr
Licorice 15 gr
White peony root 30 gr
Schizandra* 7 gr

Libido-Fertility Elixir

Epimedium 10 gr
Cistanche 30 gr
Deer antler tips (optional) 5 gr
Licorice root 15 gr
Rehmannia (prep) 30 gr
Ho sho wu, 30 gr
Schizandra* 7 gr

Restoration/youth Elixir

Ho sho wu 30 gr
Eucommia bark 30 gr
Rehmannia 30 gr
Jujube 20 gr
Astragalus 15 gr
Goji 20 gr
Schizandra* 7 gr

Bone Elixir

Eucommia bark 20 gr
Drynaria 15 gr
Dypsacus 15 gr
Ho sho wu
White peony 20 gr
Morinda 15 gr
Licorice 15 gr
Goji 15 gr
Schizandra* 7 gr
Pearl 3 gr

Menopause Elixir,

Prepared rehmannia 20 gr
Raw rehmannia 20 gr
Ho Sho Wu 30 gr
Dioscorea 20 gr
White peony 20 gr
Astragalus 10 gr
Jujube 15 gr
Goji 15 gr

Schizandra* 7gr

Pearl 3 gr

For thyroid support, add Laminaria 10 gr

Lovers Elixir (to share)

Ho sho wu 20 gr

Dendrobium pod 10 gr

Epimedium 10 gr

Rehmannia 20 gr

Reishi 10 gr

Astragalus 10 gr

Goji 20 gr

Schizandra* 7 gr

Pearl 3 gr

Yin Replenish Elixir for Healers,

Dendrobuim pod 30 gr,

Ophiopogon 30 gr

Schizandra* 7 gr

Goji 30 gr

Rehmannia 20 gr

Licorice root 20 gr

Extraction Techniques

The majority of Chinese herbs are best “decocted” in hot water. Most Chinese herbs are referred to as “long cook” herbs; they require an extended cooking time in boiling water in order to have their constituents adequately

extracted. This extended boiling procedure does not destroy the important medicinal properties, and is necessary to “unlock” the nutrients in the dense lignin cellular structures. Long cook herbs include most roots, barks, sticks, seeds, stalks and mineral substances and herbs such as deer antler.

Other herbs are called “short cook” herbs, and include Schizandra, Magnolia, Mint, Taraxaci (dandelion), Gardenia, Uncaria, Ligusticum, Gynostemma, soft Albizzia flower, Carthamus, Cinnamon twig and Citrus peel, among others. Delicate herbs such as flowers, leaves and grasses are classified as short-cook herbs and should be added only at the end of the long cook cycle. If cooked too long, their valuable constituents will be destroyed. The procedure for herb formula decoction is to cook the long-cook herbs for a specified amount of time, anywhere between 1 and 3 hours, on a low simmer in a covered pot, and then add the short cook herbs during the last few minutes. In this way, short and long cook herbs may effectively be combined in one formula. Often times a well-balanced herbal formulation will include both long and short cook herbs. This alchemy is enjoyable to engage in, as you become an integral part of the development of the final product. You leave an energetic imprint in the tea by being involved in the process of its creation.

Elixirs can taste good

Herbal teas can be delightful; they don't have to taste unpleasant to be effective. Master Teegarden taught me to

prepare the teas to taste good for our customers. We would accomplish this by adding the herb Lohan quo (monkfruit); a dried fruit bulb that is crushed with mortar and pestle. Adding some of this herb to your tea from the beginning of the long cook can provide very pleasing results. My customers often respond approvingly when tasting the teas. Adjust density and bitterness by diluting to taste and adding sweetness. Add nut milk and honey to make a latte-like drink. Herb powdered extracts may be mixed into smoothies and hot drinks.

Decoction methods

Selected herbs can be combined in a glass container with rum, bourbon, brandy or vodka. Over time the alcohol will draw out the properties of the herbs in an “infusion.” A small shot of this solution may be consumed daily. It is said in China that some of the oldest people attribute their longevity to taking a daily shot of herbal infused alcohol. But remember, a small amount is therapeutic, and more can harm the liver. Master Teegarden taught us that the Taoist masters in China believe the Americans should avoid any kind of alcohol, as our livers are stressed by the many carcinogens we encounter daily. The popular Chinese anti-aging herbal product Sho Wu Chi, which is an alcohol infusion of Ho Sho Wu and other herbs ~ is a wonderful rejuvenation product, but due to the taxed liver of so many Americans, the Chinese produce an alcohol-free version for American consumers.

Herbs can be diluted into creams or oils to produce topical applications. These are called “dit dot jiao.” These can be very effective in relieving skin inflammations, fungus and muscle aches.

Herbs can be infused into chocolates. Reishi, Cordyceps, Rhodiola, Eucommia, Ho Sho Wu, Rehmannia, Goji and many of the tonic herbs blend well into the taste of chocolate.

Herbal smoothies are popular too. Almond, cashew or other nut milks make great menstrums for diluted herbal powdered extracts. I usually add a little yoghurt and honey to these shakes, cacao and/or carob too. For creaminess, add avocado, coconut crème, lucuma, mesquite, vanilla, cinnamon, etc.

Herbal Smoothie

In almond milk, add 1 avocado, 1/4 teaspoon reishi powdered extract, 1/4 teaspoon Ho sho wu powdered extract, 1/4 teaspoon Cordyceps powdered extract, 1/2 teaspoon raw cacao powder. Add honey to taste, blend on high speed until smooth. You may also choose to add banana, mango and/or fresh berries. Other pleasant tasting herbal powdered extracts to add include Astragalus, Goji, Schizandra, Pearl, Longan, Jujube, Rehmannia, White Atractylodes, Dioscorea.

For other herbal preparation techniques, I recommend reading James Green’s “Herbal Medicine Makers Handbook.”

Chapter Ten

Summary

When the Three Treasures are tonified, magnified and brought into balance within the forces of yin and yang, life

flourishes and *transformation* occurs. It could be transition of cells from one state to another, or adaptation of an entire species from one state to another. When a species comes into balance with all life, it could evolve into a more mature, refined or sublime state than before. Conversely, when a species, an individual, or a cell loses balance and is corrupted, the opposite can occur, a digression of integrity, and at some point, the entity or species faces death or possible extinction.

An onslaught of man-made carcinogens is corroding the Three Treasures of our health, and imperiling our destiny. It appears we are approaching self-imposed annihilation. Greek philosopher Plotinus wrote in 250 B.P., "When one introduces a thing into action, he by its very nature sets into motion its opposite." With the rise of interest in superfoods, herbs, yogic and spiritual disciplines, movements towards sustainable organic agriculture, and serious environmental concerns, it is evident that directional imperatives are at hand. Pre-Taoist health philosophy is resurfacing at this very fortuitous time. The Gate of Life tenets hold that Jing can be restored, even after up to three generations of damage, albeit, the more difficult the restoration of genetic integrity will be with each succeeding generation; within a certain time frame, it *can* be done. I believe we can reinstate the health of the human genome, and will begin earnestly laboring *en mass* to restore the ecological balance of our tortured planet.

The current era is referred to as the "Anthropogenic", designating human activity as the primary driving force behind the planetary changes that will affect this and

subsequent geological periods. It is proposed that, with effort, we can help influence the future of life on Earth into another era called the “Symbiogenic”. This implies that we will work with our planet to restore harmony through understanding the needs of plants and their consciousness ~ their wisdom can guide us ~ all we have to do is listen and act. Once accomplished, we will enter a higher state of consciousness; “Homo Luminous.”

All living organisms experience distinct phases of life cycles. Humankind has to progress through evolutionary phases of life and learning, from early hominids to sentient creatures, contemplating abstraction, irony, satire, guilt, and the cultivation of wisdom. I believe we have not fully culminated our immature phase, but are at the threshold, exhibiting signs of mass transformation to a more mature phase in our collective destiny.

The genomes of living organisms have undergone a lot of planning and architecture, piling proteins on one another, meshing sugars, lipids and liquids, orchestrating a 3.5 billion year myriad of complex life on Earth. When life reaches a precipice, the environment will trigger adaptive gene expression for organisms to transition.

Many of us can see that our sphere of environment has changed; we are metamorphosing. Maybe this is an evolutionary agenda ~ some hear the messages of change *beforehand* and respond, adapt and prepare, and some don't. Those of us who are changing must become *The Light*, pointing the way so that others can join the metamorphosis.

As we detoxify ourselves and tonify our bodily and spiritual energies, the messages of the metamorphosis will be received in order to meet a new era. When we are purified and living fully in the Tao, our frequencies will be of an ethereal nature and possibly invisible to those on the dense levels, who may be reluctant to join in the change that is so necessary. There is little time left; we must make this change. We are coming full circle to the way the ancient Pre-Taoist Hsien sages described and pointed to, as our true road home.

You are on the road of the Tao. Please walk passionately and consciously, with wisdom and care. Be aware of the surroundings and your intuition; liberate your soul but stay grounded. Know the extremes around you but remain balanced. Be prepared to allow a lifetime to reveal your road ~ the home inside ~ the center point ~ the place between earth and heaven ~ the leaping point from the bliss and the abyss, and the successful resolution of the challenges and lessons of duality. We can look forward to our older years when we have lived a life of accumulated knowledge that becomes wisdom, but are still physically fit, strong and perceptive, to fully harvest the fruit we worked to cultivate.

Continue to deepen your insights into the seen and unseen beauty of this illusion called life. The harmonious balancing of the material and the higher frequencies is a wonderful melody to behold. Hear the song in its completeness, and strive to experience the feeling of its many frequencies as they pass through you.

Before the Heaven and Earth existed
There was something nebulous:
Silent, isolated,
Standing alone, changing not,
Eternally revolving without fail,
Worthy to be Mother of all things.
I do not know its name
And address it as Tao.
If forced to give it a name, I shall call it "Great."
Being great implies reaching out in space,
Reaching out in space implies far-reaching
Far reaching implies reversion to the original point.

Man models himself after Earth;
The Earth models itself after Heaven;
The Heaven models itself after Tao;
Tao models itself after nature.

Lao Tzu

About the author



Rehmannia Dean Thomas was born in 1957 in Louisville Ky. As a child, he was fascinated with Chinese Taoist folklore. He married Sharon Leong in 1985 and traveled to Northern Manchurian China, where he was first exposed to the Chinese herbs. Walking the herb bazaars at night, he felt he was peering back many centuries, and was inspired by the reverence the herbalists, farmers and collectors maintained for the herbs.

Returning to San Francisco, he and Sharon began making herbal tinctures using recipes from Ron Teeguarden's book "Taoist Tonic Herbs."

He met Master Teeguarden in 1998, and quickly became his primary apprentice and "Teamaster" for the following eight years.

Rehmannia left Master Teeguarden in 2006 to begin his company Shaman Shack Herbs. Since then he has written six books, including Raw Chi, Healing Thresholds, Elixirs of

Immortality, and a novel, *The Hsien* (The Immortals). He has created an extensive line of complex Tonic herbal formulas, introducing to the Western world the idea of bulk (non-encapsulated) tonic herbal powdered extracts for elixir making.

Rehmannia gives lectures and workshops on Tonic herbs and elixir making, and has created the first online course on Taoist Tonic Herbalism, GateOfLife.org.

His website is shamanshackherbs.com.

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